

THE NOBLE ELITE IN THE COUNTY OF KÖRÖS  
(KRIŽEVCI) 1400–1526

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BY  
TAMÁS PÁLOSFALVI



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ÉRTEKEZÉSEK

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MTA Bölcsészettudományi Kutatóközpont  
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# 1. INTRODUCTION

## 1.1. JUSTIFICATION OF THE SUBJECT

At the origins of the present book lay a research which was simply aimed at shedding some light upon the social background of the persons who functioned as vicebans<sup>1</sup> in the late medieval *regnum Sclavonie*.<sup>2</sup> It soon became evident, however, that in terms of landed wealth the great majority of them were mostly, or exclusively based in the county of Körös (in Croatian Križevci). The reasons of this phenomenon will be explored later on. Yet it also became clear that such an analysis could not be complete without uncovering the whole social network which linked these families to the rest of the nobility<sup>3</sup> within and without Slavonia in the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries. Hence my decision to include into the research the whole noble “élite” of the county of Körös, in the widest possible sense of the word.

I use the term “noble élite” to define the object of my research, although it is as chimerical as possible. With one exception, no one ever tried to find out whether such an élite within the nobility of a given county existed at all in the sense of a social group that can be defined in terms of wealth, attitudes, career possibilities or marriage strategies as distinct from the rest of the nobility both upwards and, more importantly, downwards. Expressions such as “well-to-

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1 The term viceban (*vicebanus* in Latin) designates the deputy of the ban, the office-holder who, appointed by the king, governed Slavonia, from 1476 together with Croatia. See also next note.

2 The Slavonian realm, *Regnum Sclavonie*, was a territorial-administrative unit within the medieval kingdom of Hungary. It was headed by the ban (*banus Sclavonie*), who was always appointed by the Hungarian king. It comprised, during the period which is investigated in the present book, the two counties of Körös and Zagreb, and, from the latter part of the fifteenth century, that of Varasd (Varaždin, CRO). That is, these counties were, or became, subjected to the ban's political and judicial authority. From a geographical, and indeed, social, point of view, the small county of Verőce (Virovitica, CRO) also belonged to Slavonia, although administered throughout the middle ages by an *ispán* of its own appointed directly by the king.

3 Unlike in England, the word nobility (Hung. *nemesség*) refers in Hungarian scholarship to all those persons who enjoyed the privileges attached to noble status which were codified by royal decrees from 1222 on. See the article “nemes” by Pál Engel, in *Korai Magyar Történeti Lexikon (9–14. század)* [Lexicon of Early Hungarian History (Ninth to Fourteenth Century)], ed. Gyula Kristó, Pál Engel and Ferenc Makk (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1994), 483–84.

do/rich nobility” (*tehetős/jómódú/vagyonos köznemesség* in Hungarian),<sup>4</sup> “illustrious noblemen” (*nemesi előkelők*),<sup>5</sup> “noble elite” (*köznemési elit*)<sup>6</sup> or “nobility of middling wealth” (*középbirtokos nemesség*)<sup>7</sup> are commonplace in the historical literature. Yet, with the exception perhaps of “well-to-do nobility” (in the Latin form of *nobilis benepossessionatus*), none of these terms is warranted by contemporary usage, but are the results of scholarly efforts at grasping social differences which must have been clearly perceived by contemporaries as well. Such categories are normally described in terms of official titles and revenues in the West: knights and esquires in England, chevaliers and écuyers in France, represent more or less clearly distinguishable strata within noble society, with corresponding levels of income.<sup>8</sup> These categories, on the other hand, were indissolubly connected to an underlying chivalric-military ethos, the rites of which clearly marked the joining of any individual, of whatever birth, the ranks of the nobility, and the attribution of the quality of “noble” remained strictly dependent on the continuous manifestation of the outward signs of chivalric life.<sup>9</sup> In Hungary, however, no such titles and no similar chivalric ethos and corresponding practice existed,

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- 4 István Tringli, *Az újkor hajnala. Magyarország története 1440–1541* [The Dawn of the Modern Age. A History of Hungary 1440–1541] (Budapest: Vince, 2003), 129–30. István Kádas, “Egy abaúji atyafiság Mátyás király udvarában. Adalékok a Semsei család Hunyadi-kori történetéhez” [A Family from Abaúj County in the Court of King Matthias. On the History of the Semsei Family in the Hunyadi Era], in *Micae Mediaevales II.*, ed. Bence Péterfi, András Vadas, Gábor Mikó, and Péter Jakab (Budapest: ELTE BTK Történelemtudományok Doktori Iskola, 2012), 142.
  - 5 Pál Engel, Gyula Kristó, and András Kubinyi, *Magyarország története 1301–1526* [The History of Hungary 1301–1526] (Budapest: Osiris, 1998), 311; András Kubinyi, *Mátyás király* [King Matthias of Hungary] (Budapest: Vince, 2001), 34.
  - 6 Elemér Mályusz, *Zsigmond király uralma Magyarországon 1387–1437* [The Reign of King Sigismund in Hungary 1387–1437] (Budapest: Gondolat, 1984), 139.
  - 7 András Kubinyi, “A középbirtokos nemesség Mohács előestéjén” [The Nobility of Middling Wealth on the Eve of Mohács], in *Magyarország társadalma a török kiűzésének előestéjén* [The Society of Hungary on the Eve of the Expulsion of the Ottomans], ed. Ferenc Szvircsek (Salgótarján: Nógrád Megyei Múzeumok Igazgatósága, 1984), 5–24.
  - 8 Chris Given-Wilson, *The English Nobility in the Late Middle Ages* (London: Routledge, 1996), 69–73; Gerald Harriss, *Shaping the Nation. England 1360–1461* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2005), 136–38; Christopher Dyer, *Making a Living in the Middle Ages. The People of Britain 850–1520* (New Haven–London: Yale U. P., 2009), 340–41; Philippe Contamine, *La noblesse au royaume de France de Philippe le Bel a Louis XII: Essai de synthèse* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1999), 131–33. On the problems of social stratification of the English gentry, the different points of view involved, and the evolution of terminology see Christine Carpenter, *Locality and Polity. A Study of Warwickshire Landed Society, 1401–1499* (Cambridge: University Press, 1992), 39–95.
  - 9 „Si la société politique bourguignonne accepte l’entrée d’hommes nouveaux dans le groupe nobiliaire, qui n’est en rien une caste, elle semble toutefois très attachée à l’idée qu’il n’est de noblesse que d’armes et qu’un individu, qu’il soit gentilhomme de naissance ou anobli, ne peut être juridiquement considéré comme noble au plein sens du terme que s’il ‘fréquente les armes.’” Bertrand Schnerb, “Noblesse et pouvoir princier dans les pays bourguignons au temps de Jean sans Peur (1404–1419),” in Marco Gentile and Pierre Savy, eds., *Noblesse et états princiers en Italie et en France au XVe siècle* (Rome: École Française de Rome, 2009), 11.



and, the basis of taxpaying being the tenant plot (*sessio jobagionalis*), no lists of noble revenues can be found or reconstructed. "The Hungarian nobleman was noble not because he was an offspring of knights or because he lived and thought as a knight, but simply because the land he lived on was his own, as opposed to the peasant who lived on someone else's land."<sup>10</sup> This is probably one of the main reasons which prevented historians even recently, after the fall of ideological boundaries, from trying to fill with "numbers and facts" the vague categories cited above. The enterprise is far from straightforward.

Accordingly, Pál Engel was the only one to make an attempt at reconstructing a social stratification within the boundaries of a single county. He found that the families possessing from 150 to 300 tenant plots<sup>11</sup> can clearly be distinguished from the rest of noble society both upwards and downwards, and that the characteristic feature of this group was "the king's service and courtly career". He referred to this group as *nagybirtokosok*, literally "great landowners". Below them he identified a further social layer which he called *középbirtokosság*, that is, something like "nobility of middling wealth". The members of this group, possessing roughly 20 to 100 tenant plots, provided the social reservoir from which the *familiares* (retainers) of aristocratic households were recruited. Since his analysis deliberately stopped at the important turn of 1440, his results were equally limited to the period preceding the death of Sigismund of Luxemburg. He stated emphatically himself that the model he had elaborated was only applicable within a given time-span, and was "not suitable to describe the structure of the medieval Hungarian nobility in general".<sup>12</sup>

In a more recent work he also tried to define more widely what the "élite" of the county nobility meant and identify the kinds of activity typical within their ranks. Thus, according to Engel, the "élite of the county nobility was composed of the "well-to-do" (*bene possessionatus*) families: those whose wealth – ranging from 20 to hundreds of holdings – assured a decent living. The members of this group were the leading figures in the county assemblies, and it was mostly from among these men that the ispán's<sup>13</sup> deputies, the

10 Pál Engel, *The Realm of Saint Stephen. A History of Medieval Hungary 895–1526* (London–New York: I. B. Tauris, 2001), 84.

11 A tenant plot (Hung. *jobbágytelek*) consisted normally of a peasant house and its appurtenances in and outside the village, owned by the lord, but in practice unalienable from the tenant, which served, among other things, as the basis of royal and seigneurial taxation.

12 Pál Engel, *A nemesi társadalom a középkori Ung megyében* [Noble Society in the County of Ung] (Budapest: MTA Történettudományi Intézete, 1998), 109, where the argumentation of the book is summarised.

13 Henceforward in referring to the persons governing the medieval Hungarian counties (*comes*), and their deputies (*vicecomes*) I will use the parallel Hungarian terms (*ispán* and *alispán*); for none of the English words which turn up as equivalents in English texts about Hungarian history (count, sheriff, bailiff) do refer to institutions of the same nature. On the other hand, the use of the Latin terms would suggest the existence of a "titular nobility" which only began to emerge in Hungary at the very end of the middle ages.

members of the diets as well as the castellans, stewards and leading retainers of the barons were chosen. They were distinguished from the lesser nobility by the title of *egregius*.<sup>14</sup> In this second approach the two groups of nobility distinguished with regard to the county of Ung were thus united to form an “élite” clearly distinguishable from the ranks of the poor nobility, and the characteristic features of its members developed into a whole cluster. This, again, is an important warning with regard to the methodological imprecision which still pervades Hungarian historiography dealing with the nobility.

More recently, Tibor Neumann, in a thoroughgoing study of a noble family from the county of Nyitra, also hinted at the existence, within late medieval Hungarian noble society, below the barons, of an “intermediate stratum, which was distinguished from the mass of the well-to-do nobility by the possession of one or more fortifications and several hundreds of tenant plots. Thanks to their wealth, members of these families frequently found their way into the royal court, and sometimes also acquired baronial offices there. Their separation from the ranks of the lower nobility was clearly perceived by the contemporaries: from the beginning of the fifteenth century members of this group were accorded the honorific title *egregius* even in case they had no office by virtue of which they should be entitled to it [...]”<sup>15</sup> In Neumann’s classification this layer apparently corresponds to the *nagybirtokosok* of Engel, and a further defining characteristic, that of the possession of fortification(s) is added.

Another, partly overlapping, classification of the nobility was offered by Erik Fügedi exactly forty years ago: the three groups of the “great-landowning” aristocracy (*nagybirtokos arisztokrácia*), the middling nobility (*középbirtokos nemesség*), which played a leading role regionally, and the petty nobility (*kisbirtokos nemesség*) differed from each other in terms of wealth, social and political situation, authority and political functions. [...] The sharpest line divided the aristocracy from the rest, whereas the divide between the middling and petty nobility is much more obscure.”<sup>16</sup> The most important point in this definition, also confirmed by the research of Engel, is the impossibility of finding a clear confine separating the different groups within the nobility once one descended from the clearly visible spheres of the aristocracy. More recently, Fügedi tested the model elaborated by Engel on the example of a noble family from the county of Nyitra, and, while generally admitting its applicability for the reconstruction of social stratification, he also

14 Engel, *Realm of Saint Stephen*, 340.

15 Tibor Neumann, *A Korlátköviek. Egy előkelő család története és politikai szereplése a 15–16. században* [The Korlátkövi. The History and Political Role of an Illustrious Noble Family in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries] (Győr: Győri Egyházmegyei Levéltár, 2007), 9.

16 Erik Fügedi, *A 15. századi magyar arisztokrácia mobilitása* [The Mobility of Medieval Hungarian Aristocracy] (Budapest: n.p., 1970), 11.

warned against treating the model too rigidly, emphasising the cases which defy classification.<sup>17</sup>

István Draskóczy, in his work focussing precisely upon the fifteenth century, also tried to distinguish different groups within the nobility and set the markers by which to identify their members. The group situated immediately below the aristocracy he called, with reference to title (*egregius*), as that of the *vitézlők*.<sup>18</sup> As for their landed wealth, the families belonging to this group possessed between 400 to 700 tenant plots, one or two fortifications, some of them even a market town. Members of this layer frequently had access to the royal court, and even obtained baronial office, whereas their marriage alliances united them both upwards and downwards with aristocratic<sup>19</sup> and noble families, richer and poorer respectively than themselves. The number of such *vitészlő* families, according to a report from the early sixteenth century, was a mere two or three in an average county. Below them Draskóczy identified a group with a landed wealth extending on a wide scale from 10 to 200 tenant plots, the main distinguishing feature being the absence from their possessions of fortifications, market towns and even tolls. The activities and family alliances of such families were normally limited to their native county, and the deputies of the county ispán and the *szolgabírák* (*iudices nobilium*) were generally elected from their ranks. They frequently joined the service of local magnates, becoming castellans in their castles, and from the middle of the fifteenth century the envoys to the general assemblies were also recruited from their numbers. Yet roads leading to the royal court were only exceptionally opened before them.<sup>20</sup>

Further attempts at establishing categories within the late medieval Hungarian nobility on the basis of different distinguishing features, on a regional or country-wide level, could surely be cited, but there is no point in doing that.<sup>21</sup> It has already become obvious that no general classification has

17 Erik Fügedi, *Az Elefánthyak. A középkori nemes és klánja* [The Elefánthy Kindred. The Medieval Nobleman and his Clan], (Budapest: Osiris, 1999), 166–76.

18 “Vitézlő” is the Hungarian equivalent of the Latin word *egregius*.

19 As there existed no titular aristocracy in Hungary before the second part of the fifteenth century, and even thereafter only in a limited sense, whenever I speak about the “aristocracy”, it is noble families of outstanding wealth or equally outstanding record of baronial service that I have in mind. “Barons” and “magnates” are likewise terms that are employed without a generally accepted, well-defined meaning, although, unlike the word “aristocrat” itself, they do occur in the sources. Later on I will return to the problem several times.

20 István Draskóczy, *A tizenötödik század története* [The History of the Fifteenth Century] (Budapest: Pannonica, 2000), 104–07.

21 See, for example, Géza Hegyi, “A Szilágyság birtokviszonyai a középkorban” [The Estate Structure of the Szilágyság in the Middle Ages], in *A Szilágyság és a Wesselényi család (14–17. század)* [The Szilágyság and the Wesselényi Family (Fourteenth to Seventeenth Centuries)], ed. Géza Hegyi and András W. Kovács (Kolozsvár: Erdélyi Múzeum Egyesület, 2012), 45–104; Marius Diaconescu, *Structura nobilimii din Transilvania în epoca angevină* [The Structure of the Nobility of Transylvania in the Angevin Period] (Cluj-Napoca: Edizra MEGA, 2013), 96–100.

been worked out so far which could be applied automatically or with slight modifications to the analysis of any given region of Hungary. Indeed, most general statements about the stratification of the nobility, including those cited above, are directly based on the model established by Engel with regard to the county of Ung, with modifications added by the individual authors according to their own particular expertise.<sup>22</sup> Although employing basically the same criteria, all these authors have come to divergent conclusions, the reason for which is the still almost complete absence of regional studies based, as that of Engel, on the knowledge of the complete available source material of the area concerned.

It is thus the investigation of a yet unknown or at least undefined group within the medieval nobility which I intended to undertake within the boundaries of a single county, that of Körös in Slavonia, for the period between 1400 and the traditional breakpoint marked by the battle of Mohács.<sup>23</sup> In the absence of a more convenient label, I will term it “noble élite”, and will return to the problem in the second part of the book, and examine whether such a term can at all be used and whether a social reality corresponding to it existed or not.

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- 22 All general accounts of the history of medieval Hungary or any of its periods involve as a matter of fact at least a brief description of the nobility. Take, for instance, András Kubinyi's book on king Matthias [Kubinyi, *Mátyás király*, 34], where the author distinguishes, within the nobility, an élite “with hundreds of tenants”, comprising some 400 to 500 families in all. István Tringli, for his part (*Az újkor hajnala*, 129–30) writes about the wealthy noble families, of which there were only a couple of hundreds in the whole country, and only a handful in each county; according to him, the minimum amount of tenant plots needed to be counted to this stratum was 50, but at least some of its members also possessed one or more fortifications. Neither Kubinyi, however, nor Tringli, nor any of the other historians introduces any new criterion as a basis for internal stratification.
- 23 The endpoint of the research, although traditional, is open to dispute, as all chronological markers would be. The battle of Mohács involved no immediate social consequences in the county of Körös, any more than it did in Hungary proper. Long-term changes were caused by the gradual extension of territory under constant Ottoman occupation, which only began in the 1540s. Yet, besides the “traditional” character of the year 1526, there is one practical consideration which argues for its adoption: namely the availability of sources. Thus, whereas the pre-Mohács charters are all accessible in one collection, at least in photocopies, the post-1526 charters are widely scattered in different collections and even different archives and countries, so their gathering would consume at least as much time as the thorough scrutiny of the pre-Mohács material. As for the starting point, that is, around 1400, it seemed convenient from several points of view. Since I was interested in the later medieval period, the major problem was whether I would include the Angevin period or not. What proved decisive, on the final account, was my limited knowledge of the Angevin period on the one hand, and, on the other hand, the fact that from around 1400 there is a marked increase in the number of extant sources with regard to the preceding period. It is from this point of view that the consolidation of the rule of king Sigismund, rather than his accession in 1387, seemed a more convenient starting point. It was by no means treated rigidly, for in retracing the origins of several families I was as a matter of fact forced to look beyond it, sometimes into the very obscure beginnings of Hungaro-Slavonian history.

## 1.2. RESEARCH OF THE LATE MEDIEVAL SLAVONIAN NOBILITY

Unfortunately enough, the structure and development of the late medieval Slavonian nobility as well as the history of late medieval Slavonia as such have hitherto remained almost completely outside the sphere of interest of historians in Croatia and Hungary alike. Whereas the problem of the origins of Slavonia was once the focus of a heated, though somewhat futile debate between the experts of the two countries,<sup>24</sup> and, despite some mutual gestures, there is still no consensus in this matter, the subsequent centuries of Slavonian history, much better enlightened by written sources, have not received the attention they deserve.<sup>25</sup> The reasons of this ignorance, as it seems, are different in the two countries concerned.

In Hungary the "limited extent"<sup>26</sup> of scholarly interest in the history of medieval Slavonia can broadly be explained by two main reasons. The first is the absence of research whatsoever on the medieval nobility in a regional context. Before 1990 it was one of the ideological consequences of the prevailing political regime, but, surprisingly enough, the subject has since remained as neglected as before, with only a few notable exceptions, such as Engel Pál's book on the medieval nobility of the county of Ung. The other reason is the absence on the territory of medieval Slavonia, that is, modern Croatia, of a considerable Hungarian minority, which, as in the case of Transylvania, whose status in the middle ages was in many respects similar to that of Slavonia, would surely have incited Hungarian historians to pay much more attention to it than they eventually did. Consequently, what we have dispersed throughout books and articles are mostly remarks on things regarded as "Slavonian peculiarities" within a realm (*regnum*) whose society and administration was not basically different from Hungary proper.

24 See Stanko Andrić, "Klaićev udio u rasprama Hrvatske i Mađarske historiografije" [The Part of Klaić in the Field of Croatian and Hungarian Historiography], Posebni otisak iz zbornika radova Vjekoslav Klaić život i djelo (Zagreb–Slavonski Brod: n.p., 2000) 89–96.

25 There is one work which stands out in both scope and detail and has remained a constant point of reference in Hungary and Croatia ever since its publication: Dezső Csánki, *Körösmegye a XV-ik században* [The County of Körös in the Fifteenth Century] (Budapest, 1893). Yet, as this book was originally intended to make part of the author's magnum opus on the historical geography of fifteenth-century Hungary, he made no efforts at reconstructing intra- or interfamilial links with regard to the individual settlements discussed, but simply listed all people and families who appeared as owners of any given locality. His book is therefore an indispensable tool of topographical identification, but is of little help for social reconstruction.

26 Attila Zsoldos, "Egész Szlavónia bánja" [The Ban of Whole Slavonia], in *Analecta mediaevalia I. Tanulmányok a középkorról*, ed. Tibor Neumann (Budapest–Piliscsaba: Pázmány Péter Katolikus Egyetem, 2001), 271.

In Croatia, on the other hand, historical attention turned rather towards Croatia “proper”, that is, the territory of the early medieval kingdom, and towards Dalmatia. As regards the latter, this phenomenon can only be seen as quite natural, in view of the huge source material which is available in the archives of the Dalmatian cities in quantities not matched anywhere else beyond the mountains. The apparent neglect with which the history of late medieval Slavonia has been treated can be regarded as somewhat surprising, however, as the region itself is generally perceived in Croatian historiography as making part of Croatian national history, and attached only in terms of “state structures” more closely to the medieval kingdom of Hungary than Croatia proper.<sup>27</sup> To what extent this (partial)<sup>28</sup> self-restriction can be attributed to the realisation of the fact that the history of Slavonia, unlike that of Croatia, cannot be interpreted without a similarly profound knowledge of Hungarian history, is open to debate; what is certain is that Croatian historiographical production concerning noble Slavonia is as fragmented and sparse as that in Hungary.

On the Hungarian side, Pál Engel prepared the genealogies of several noble families who were, or became, rooted in Slavonia, among them several of those treated in the present book.<sup>29</sup> In some cases his reconstructions are in need of no or very little correction; in others, however, the lacunae are conspicuous. For instance, with regard to the Bocskai<sup>30</sup> and Pekri families, it is

27 Eg.: Franjo Šanjek and Franko Mirošević, eds., *Povijest Hrvata. Prva knjiga. Srednji vijek* [History of Croatia. First Book. The Middle Ages] (Zagreb: Školska Knjiga, 2003), 190: “Although already king Ladislaus tried to attach Slavonia with closer links to the Hungarian kingdom by the foundation of the bishopric of Zagreb in the early 1090s, the region remained an integral part of the Croatian kingdom throughout the Árpád period [...] In the social identity of the nobility which had developed in Croatia south of the Velebit mountain at the end of the high middle ages, Slavonia could not be other than part of Croatia.” This situation was further reinforced at the end of the fifteenth century, when “the constitutional union of Slavonia and Croatia was effected [...] at the general assembly at Buda in March 1492.” (ibid. 203). In what this structural cohesion between Croatia and Slavonia manifested itself more exactly either before or after 1492 is hard to tell on the basis of this book, for, beyond some very general remarks about “social development”, it reveals nothing about either the political structures or the noble society of Slavonia.

28 Urban history (especially that of Zagreb), for instance, or the history of Croatian noble families whose activity extended over Slavonia, are exceptions to this rule.

29 Pál Engel, *Magyar középkori adattár, Középkori magyar genealógia* [Hungarian Medieval Database, Medieval Hungarian Genealogies], CD-ROM (Budapest: Arcanum, 2001).

30 The spelling of names presents serious, and sometimes unsolvable, problems. The region which constitutes the subject of this book once belonged to the medieval kingdom of Hungary, and now makes part of Croatia. Some of the localities of which the families examined below were named have survived until now, others disappeared without trace. Those which exist today bear Croatian names, which do not always correspond to the medieval names, and the same applies to the current denomination of several families. Thus, the descendants of ban Tibold are commonly referred to in Croatian historiography as Svetački, a name which first appears after 1526; the name of the settlement where they lived was Szencse (*Zenche*, *Zemche*) in the middle ages, and its lords called of Szencse (*de Zenche*), and, at the very end, even



Szencsei (*Zempchey*). Similarly, the members of the Slavonian branch of the Tétény kindred were known as Pekri, perhaps Pökri (*de Pukur, Pewkur, Pewker*, and a lot more versions, but also frequently *Pewkry*), whereas they are referred to as Pakrački in modern Croatian historiography, a form which never occurs in any medieval document. It is, of course, absolutely possible that the predominantly Croatian population of the regions where these noble families lived called them by the names of Svetački and Pakrački respectively; yet it remains a fact that these names have no recorded medieval memory. The vanished residence of one branch of the Kasztellánfi family is now called Sveti Duh (Duhovi, near Garešnica), that is, Holy Spirit, in Croatian; in medieval documents it is almost exclusively called Szentlélek (*Zenthlylek, Zenthleluk*, etc), which is the equivalent Hungarian name, and occasionally Sanctus Spiritus. Moreover, the characteristic name of the family is given either in its Latin form (*filius/filii Castellan*), or in Hungarian as Kasztellánfi (*Castellanfy, Kastellanfy*, etc.), but never as Kastelanović. It is again possible, and even probable, that the Croatian peasants they dominated called them Kastelanović; on the other hand, it is also probable that the name Kasztellánfi used by the local scribes was the name used by the family itself. The situation is the same with families like the Rohfi (generally simply *Roh, filii Roh*, but occasionally also *Rohfy, Rohffy*), and the Kapitánfi (*filii Capitan*, but later regularly *Capitanfy, Kapitanffy*). The market town where the Kapitánfi lived is called in medieval charters Desnice (*Desniche, Desnicha*), and is now known as Dišnik. The town of Deche/Decha, from which the Rohfi named themselves, disappeared. The medieval village of Bakolca (*Bakolcha, Bakolcza*) is now called (Donja) Bukovica; its owners in the medieval charters turn up as *de Bakolcha*, and I have found no trace of their Croatian denomination either in the middle ages or thereafter. The case is similar with the kindred owning Ervence, a settlement vanished by now; they are always referred to as *de Erwenchel/cze* in the charters, along which it would have been possible to forge a Croatian name, although, apparently, Croatian historians also use the charter form (e.g. Duje Rendić-Miočević et al., eds., *Diplomatski Zbornik kraljevine Hrvatske, Dalmacije i Slavonije. Codex diplomaticus regni Croatiae, Dalmatiae et Slavoniae*. Volumen XVIII. 1395–1399 [Zagreb: n.p., 1990] 285). Another problem is created by the mere historical longevity of certain families and the transformations it involved. Thus, the Alapi family may have turned “Croatian” enough by the early seventeenth century to be called Alapić, but before 1526 they are exclusively called of Alap (*de Alap*), a village in the Hungarian county of Fejér, and sometimes Alapy. Again, the standard Croatian name for the Csupor family is Čupor Moslavački/od Moslavina. It is apparently believed (see Stanko Andrić, “Podgorje Papuka i Krndije u srednjem vijeku: prilozi za lokalnu povijest (prvi dio)” [The Region at the Feet of the Papuk and Krndija Mountains in the Middle Ages: Contributions to Local History (First part)], *Scrinia Slavonica* 8 (2008): 60] that the kindred descended from a certain Moyslav, a Slav chief, whose name lived on in the form of Moslavina. But the name of this settlement is always rendered as Monoszló (*Manaslou, Monozlou*), which can certainly not be derived from Moyslav, whose existence, moreover, is purely hypothetical. Nor are members of the kindred called *de genere Monozlo* before the fourteenth century. Consequently, and in order to avoid the confusion which would inevitably emerge from any effort at trying to solve all these problems, I adopted the following solution. In all cases where the families concerned have a “family name” alongside the name of the settlement where they resided, I used the Hungarian form which is closest to the documented medieval version, with the English prefix of, giving, when it first appears, in brackets the medieval Latinised and the actual Croatian name, if there is one, of the namegiving settlement, with the Christian name anglicised (thus: George Kasztellánfi of Szentlélek [de Zenthlelek, Sveti Duh/Duhovi, CRO], Andrew Kapitánfi of Desnice [de Desniche, Dišnik, CRO], Ladislav Rohfi of Décsé [de Deche]). In cases where the families were simply called by a possession, I used the Hungarian form with the -i suffix, again giving, if possible, the Croatian, and always the charter version (Ladislav Ervencei [de Erwenche], Stephen Prasovci [de Praschowcz, Praščevec, CRO], etc). Of course, it by no

the two most important members respectively, that is, Peter Bocskai and Louis Pekri, who have not found their proper place on the family tree. The same author in his great archontological work<sup>31</sup> provided ample information with regard to the individual careers of a great number of persons based in the county of Körös, but, since he stopped in 1457, the greater part of the period covered by the present book remained outside the remit of his collection. Engel also devoted a paper to the history of the Fánecs family in the fourteenth century,<sup>32</sup> yet he apparently wrongly searched for their origins in the medieval county of Somogy. Norbert C. Tóth added important new information to the history of the same family in the later middle ages, but since his aim was limited (the reconstruction of the family's wealth in 1424), he refrained from depicting their history in detail, and his genealogical tree, although more complete than that of Engel, is still not perfect.<sup>33</sup> Elemér Mályusz, in a study devoted to the political structures of the Hungarian kingdom in the age of John Hunyadi, treated the careers of Benedict Turóci and Akacius Csupor in the period concerned, and Engel also dealt briefly with the Csupor family in

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means implies that the members of these families spoke Hungarian, or thought about themselves as Hungarians; some of them may have spoken Hungarian, some Croatian, or, most probably, both. One of the very few cases when the spoken tongue of a given individual can be determined comes from 1518: when contradicting to an introduction, Bernard Musinai aired his obvious indignation with the following words (*talia verba in vulgari protulit*): *Zarok rya* (I shit on it) (Magyar Nemzeti Levéltár Országos Levéltára [Hungarian National Archives, hereafter MNL OL], Diplomatikai Fényképgyűjtemény [Collection of Photocopies, hereafter DF] 209455). Thus, Bernard did speak Hungarian, which does not mean that he did not speak Croatian as well. These problems, of course, do not emerge with regard to those families which were, and continued to be after their arrival to Slavonia, called of settlements which are sited in modern Hungary; for instance, the Batthyány, Pogány, Dersfi, Kerecsényi, and so on; in their cases I have merely anglicised the Christian name. Also, in the case of families and persons whose name was evidently Croatian in the Middle Ages, such as the Čavlović or the Hobetić, I retained the Croatian spelling. In case of the medieval settlements which can be certainly identified with a modern one, I give the Croatian equivalent at the first occurrence, and all of them are presented in a list at the end of the book. As for medieval settlements which have disappeared by now, I retained the form found in the charters, without trying to find out what the correct spelling would be either in Croatian or Hungarian; in dubious cases I give the form which figures in the source itself. I have also called the county which this book is dealing with Körös instead of Križevci, which, again, is by no means an indication that it can be regarded as ethnically Hungarian in the middle ages.

- 31 Pál Engel, *Magyarország világi archontológiája 1301–1457* [The Secular Archontology of Medieval Hungary], vols. I–II (Budapest: MTA Történettudományi Intézete, 1996).
- 32 Pál Engel, "Néhány XIV. századi erdélyi alvajda származása" [The Origins of Some Deputy Voevodes of Transylvania from the Fourteenth Century], in *Emlékkönyv Jakó Zsigmond születésének nyolcvanadik évfordulójára* [Festschrift for the Eightieth Birthday of Zsigmond Jakó], ed. András Kovács, Gábor Sipos, and Sándor Tonk (Kolozsvár: Erdélyi Múzeum Egyesület, 1996), 176–86.
- 33 Norbert C. Tóth, "A Gordovai család vagyoni helyzete 1424-ben" [The Landed Wealth of the Fánecs of Gordova Family in 1424], in *Várak, templomok, ispotályok. Tanulmányok a magyar középkorról* [Castles, Churches, Hospitals. Studies on the Hungarian Middle Ages], ed. Tibor Neumann (Budapest: Argumentum, 2004), 271–90.



connection with the early history of the Hunyadi family.<sup>34</sup> Iván Borsa examined a brief paper to the history of the Kerhen of Belosovc family,<sup>35</sup> whereas Géza Pálffy succinctly summarised that of the Budor of Budrovc in the middle ages in a study which basically dealt with the post-1526 period.<sup>36</sup> I myself reconstructed in detail the “public” life of another leading Slavonian nobleman, Ladislás Hermanfi of Greben (Grebengrad, CRO),<sup>37</sup> and György Rácz recently retraced the origins of the Batthyány family, purging the fabulous historical tradition which has so far dominated the research.<sup>38</sup> Evidently enough, many of the families treated in the present book turn up here and there on the pages of historical works of a more general character in various contexts, which is natural in view of their manifold activities and interregional connections, and these works will be cited at the appropriate places. None of these works, however, can spare us the effort of turning directly to the charters in order to gather the greatest possible amount of information with regard to the families concerned; for it is evident that it is by that means only that any historical investigation can yield results which may claim durability for themselves.

As for the Croatian side, Vjekoslav Klaić devoted a long article to the history of the Szencsei family, which, despite its age and some errors of reconstruction, remains a mine of information even today.<sup>39</sup> Thanks to Klaić, the Szencsei is one among the two Slavonian families whose history can be followed from beginning to end with relatively many details. The other is the Kasztellánfi, whose family record has recently been retraced by Ivan Jurković and Pavao Maček in a book of peculiar form, of which more will be said in the

34 Elemér Mályusz, “A magyar rendi állam Hunyadi korában” [The Hungarian Corporate State in the Age of Hunyadi], *Századok* 91 (1957): 531, 535. Pál Engel, “Hunyadi pályakezdése” [The Early Career of Hunyadi], in idem, *Honor, vár, ispánság. Válogatott tanulmányok* [Honour, Castle, Ispánate. Selected Studies], ed. Enikő Csukovits (Budapest: Osiris, 2003), 516–17.

35 Iván Borsa, “A Gorbónoki, majd Belosovci Kerhen család történetéhez” [On the History of the Gorbónoki, later Kerhen of Belosovc Family], in *Somogy Megye Múltjából. Levéltári Évkönyv* [separatum] (Kaposvár, n.p. 1991), 5–12.

36 Géza Pálffy, “Egy szlavóniai köznemesi familia két ország szolgálatában: a Budrovc Budor család a XV–XVIII. Században” [A Slavonian Noble Family in the Service of Two Countries. The Budor of Budrovc Family in the Fifteenth to Eighteenth Centuries], *Hadtörténelmi Közlemények* 115, no 4 (2002): 923–1007.

37 Tamás Pálosfalvi, “Grebeni Hermanfi László alnádor. Egy tekintélyes szlavón köznemesi politikus pályaképe. Első közlemény” [Deputy Palatine Ladislás Hermanfi of Greben. The Career of an Influential Slavonian Noble Politician. Part One], *Századok* 141 (2007): 843–77; Második közlemény [Part Two], *Századok* 142 (2008): 267–313.

38 György Rácz, “Egy főnemesi család eredete és ‘pályakezdése.’” A Battyányiak az Anjou- és Zsigmond korban” [The Origins and the Early Career of an Aristocratic Family. The Batthyány in the Age of the Angevins and Sigismund], in *Honoris causa. Tanulmányok Engel Pál tiszteletére*, ed. Tibor Neumann and György Rácz (Budapest-Piliscsaba: MTA Történettudományi Intézete-Pázmány Péter Katolikus Egyetem Bölcsészettudományi Kara, 2009) 301–57.

39 Vjekoslav Klaić, “Plemići Svetački ili nobiles de Zempche (997–1719)” [The Noble Family of Szencse], *Rad JAZU*, knjiga 199 (1913) 1–66.

appropriate section below.<sup>40</sup> Alongside these two families, others, which likewise figure in the present book, such as the Csupor,<sup>41</sup> the descendants of Isaac,<sup>42</sup> the successive owners of Ludbreg (Ludbreg, CRO),<sup>43</sup> or the Budor,<sup>44</sup> were also given some treatment in Croatian, yet none of these articles aspired to the same comprehensiveness as the two works devoted respectively to the Szencsei and the Kasztellánfi.

In an article which was published almost simultaneously with the work of Klaić on the Szencsei, Juraj Čuk explored the early history of several noble families which lived in the region south of the Drava river; although his research was based uniquely on the documents published by Smičiklas in his great collection, his results are sometimes of relevance even today.<sup>45</sup> More recently, Marija Karbić devoted a small article to Damian Horváth of Litva (Čabrad, SL), who acquired extensive estates in Körös and rose to become ban of Slavonia in the 1470s,<sup>46</sup> and she dealt with the history of the noble community of Turopolje in the neighbouring county of Zagreb as well.<sup>47</sup> The same author examined extensively the history of the Borić family from the county of Pozsega (Požega);<sup>48</sup> indeed, it seems that Pozsega is more covered

40 Pavao Maček and Ivan Jurković, *Rodoslov plemića i baruna Kastelanovića od Svetog Duha (od 14. do 17. stoljeca)* [The Family of the Nobles and Barons Kasztellánfi of Szentlélek from the Fourteenth to the Seventeenth Century] (Slavonski Brod: Hrvatski Institut za Povijest, 2009).

41 Marko Bedić, "Čupori Moslavački" [The Csupor of Monoszló], *Kaj – časopis za književnost, umjetnost i kultura*, 28, no. 3 (1995): 53–67.

42 Josip Buturac, "Iz prošlosti Cirkvene i okolice" [On the Past of Cirkvena and its Region], *Križevački zbornik* 2 (1982): 93–115; Idem, *Vrbovec i okolica 1134–1984* [Vrbovec and its Region], (Vrbovec: n.p., 1984).

43 Marija Winter, "Ludbreški grad i njegovi gospodari" [The Town of Ludbreg and its Lords], *Podravski zbornik* 6 (1980): 357–69; Hrvoje Petrić, "Ludbreg i ludbreska podravina u srednjem vijeku" [Ludbreg and its Region along the Drava River in the Middle Ages], *Podravski zbornik* 21 (1995): 29–37.

44 Josip Buturac, "Feudalna gospoštija i plemićki rod Budor" [The Feudal Lordship and Noble Family Budor], *Podravski zbornik* 15 (1989): 99–103.

45 Juraj Čuk, "Podravina od Bednje do Voćinke i susjedna područja do polovice četrnaestoga vijeka (plemstvo–posjedi–uprava)" [The Region along the Drava from Bednja to Atyina and the Neighbouring Territories until the Middle of the Fourteenth Century (Nobility–Possessions–Administration)], *Vjesnik Kraljevskog hrvatsko-slavonsko-dalmatinskog zemaljskog arhiva* 18 (1916): 169–232.

46 Marija Karbić, "Od hrvatskog sitnog plemića do ugarskog velikaša i hrvatskog bana: Damjan Horvat od Litve i njegova obitelj" [From a Petty Croatian Nobleman into a Hungarian Baron and Ban of Croatia: Damján Horváth of Litva and his Kindred], in *Croato-Hungarica. Uz 900 godina hrvatsko-mađarskih povijesnih veza. A horvát-magyar történelmi kapcsolatok 900 éve alkalmából* [In Memory of Nine Hundred Years of Croatian–Hungarian Relations], ed. Milka Jauk-Pinhak, Csaba Kiss Gy., and István Nyomárkay (Zagreb: n.p. 2002), 119–25.

47 Marija Karbić, "Heiratsstrategien des Kleinadels von Turopolje (Slawonien) im späten Mittelalter," *East Central Europe* 29, no.1–2 (2002): 167–76.

48 Marija Karbić, "Posjedi plemićkog roda Borića bana do sredine XIV stoljeća" [The Possessions of the Noble Kindred of Borić Ban until the Middle of the Fourteenth Century], *Scrinia Slavonica* 5 (2005): 48–61.

by regional studies of the nobility than Slavonia itself.<sup>49</sup> Although not directly concerning the county of Körös and its noble élite, all these studies do offer some information and insight for us, even if the structure of the nobility in the counties of either Zagreb or Pozsega could be very different from what we find in Körös.

Even more useful for the study of the nobility in the county of Körös is the prolific literature on local history which, after earlier beginnings,<sup>50</sup> has recently been flourishing in Croatia. Represented before all by the articles Ranko Pavleš,<sup>51</sup> but contributed to by others as well,<sup>52</sup> these works add a lot to the reconstruction of the medieval topography of Slavonia, which has been greatly altered by the consequences of the Ottoman conquest and occupation. Apparently, this kind of topographic reconstruction suffers from one major weakness, as it relies uniquely on published sources. It, moreover, pays practically no attention to the families who owned in the middle ages the settlements in question. Consequently, none of these works makes a fresh examination of the sources redundant, an effort which, as will hopefully become evident later on, pays off abundantly even in cases which have so far seemed definitively settled once and for all.



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- 49 Borislav Grgin, "Hrvatska historiografija o Požegi i Požeškoj županiji u razvijenom i kasnom srednjem vijeku" [Croatian Historiography relating to Pozsega and the County of Pozsega in the High and Late Middle Ages], *Scrinia Slavonica* 8 (2008): 113–32.
- 50 Kamilo Dočkal, "Srednjovjekovna naselja oko Dobre Kuće" [Medieval Settlements around Dobrukuća], *Starine JAZU* 48 (1958): 85–167; Idem, "Srednjovjekovna naselja oko Streze" [Medieval Settlements around Streza], *Starine JAZU* 46 (1956): 145–202.
- 51 Ranko Pavleš, "Srednjovjekovna topografija Cirkvene, Žabne i njihove okolice" [The Medieval Topography of Cirkvena, Žabna and their Surroundings], *Cris* XI (2009) no. 1: 17–29; Idem, "Apatovec, Cerovo Brdo i neki susjedni posjedi u srednjem vijeku" [Apatovec, Cerovo Brdo and some Neighbouring Possessions in the Middle Ages], *Cris* VI (2004) no. 6: 35–46; Idem, "Četiri posjeda u srednjovjekovnom kalničkom kotaru" [Five Settlements in the Medieval District of Kemlék], *Cris* VIII (2006) no. 1: 5–13; Idem, *Koprivničko i đurđevačko vlastelinstvo. Povijest, topografija, organizacija* [The Lordship of Kapronca and Szentgyörgy. History, Topography, Organisation] (Koprivnica: n.p., 2001).
- 52 Zdenko Balog, *Križevačko-kalnička regija u srednjem vijeku* [The Region of Körös-Kemlék in the Middle Ages] (Križevci: n.p., 2003); Stanko Andrić, "Podgorje Papuka i Krndije u srednjem vijeku: prilozi za lokalnu povijest (prvi dio)" [The Region at the Feet of the Papuk and Krndija Mountains in the Middle Ages: Contributions to Local History (First part)], *Scrinia Slavonica* 8 (2008) no. 1: 55–112.

## 1.3. THE SOURCES AND THEIR LIMITS

The county of Körös was chosen, as mentioned before, partly because of my previous research on the government of late medieval Slavonia,<sup>53</sup> but also partly because of the relatively abundant source material available for this region of the medieval Hungarian realm.<sup>54</sup> Although the choice was thus evident, it involved some risks as well. Körös was one of the greatest and most densely populated counties of medieval Hungary, but also one of those most seriously afflicted by Ottoman incursions and occupation. Consequently, the source material, albeit abundant, is of very uneven distribution. Part of the county is fortunately covered by the Batthyány<sup>55</sup> archives, perhaps the biggest and certainly the richest collection of medieval Hungarian sources.<sup>56</sup> This collection is like a strong headlamp, sharply enlightening the contours of local society within its reach. Yet, as most of the other noble archives perished together with the families which owned them as the Ottoman expansion proceeded, the rest is left in semi-darkness, only occasionally highlighted by information gathered from the material of local ecclesiastical institutions, numerically rich, but spread over a huge territory. One example, that of the Pekri family, will sufficiently illustrate the problem facing the historian. The

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53 Tamás Pálosfalvi, "Cilleiek és Tallóciak: küzdelem Szlavóniáért (1440–1448)" [The Counts of Cilli and the Tallóci: Struggle for Slavonia (1440–1448)], *Századok* 134 (2000): 45–98; Idem, "Vitovec János. Egy zsoldoskarrier a 15. századi Magyarországon" [John Vitovec. A Mercenary Career in Fifteenth-Century Hungary], *Századok* 135 (2001): 429–72; Idem, "Grebeni Hermanfi," I–II.

54 The medieval county of Körös, which extended from the river Drava in the north to the river Sava in the south, was characterised by important internal differences in terms of geography and settlement structure. It is evident that the regions along the great rivers, mostly marshlands, as well as the mountainous areas, were much more sparsely inhabited than the fertile plain lands. Correspondingly, there were areas of small but numerous noble estates, such as the region around the town of Körös itself, for instance, and others dominated by great domains with a more dispersed settlement structure. Yet in purely geographical and, consequently, economic terms virtually no county of Hungary could be regarded as a meaningful unit. The county of Körös, as all the other counties, was an administrative unit artificially created, albeit obviously in accordance with some salient geographical features, by the political power. As such a unit, however, it later developed a common identity, which was represented and expressed by the comital nobility and its political organs. It is in this sense that it offers a social sample worthy of examination, with a great number of difficulties, of course, which will emerge during my investigation and with which I will try to deal in due course. On the problem of county community vs. multiple identities in medieval England see Carpenter, *Locality and Polity*, 290–91 and ff.

55 In the case of this family I have retained the current, officially sanctioned Hungarian orthography, even though it is by no means always warranted by the medieval forms of the name.

56 MNL OL, Diplomatikai Levéltár [Collection of Charters, hereafter DL], Batthyány család levéltára.

estate of Garignica (now vanished), once part of the huge lands owned by the Tétény kindred (*genus*),<sup>57</sup> was in the course of the fifteenth century incorporated into the Grebeni/Batthyány patrimony, together with the charters which concern it.<sup>58</sup> Consequently, we have extensive knowledge about one branch of the Pekri family, down to the three consecutive marriages of the otherwise insignificant Susan Pekri and the dozens of charters regarding trivial judicial matters. On the other hand, that branch of the family which moved to the estate later called Petrovina (*Pethrowyna*), and played a much more important role both locally and finally outside Slavonia as well, but left no archives of its own, is extremely difficult to follow, and even their exact descent is hard to establish.<sup>59</sup>

Yet by far the most important consequence of this situation is that all historical reconstruction is seriously affected by the fragmentary nature of the source material available. It becomes ever more evident as one descends the social scale to reach the lower regions of the leading nobility, but before merging into the sea of the poor nobility. Thanks to the Batthyány archives, I was able to reconstruct with exceptional detail the career of Ladislás Hermanfi of Greben, founder of the Batthyány influence in Slavonia. Even his many journeys to the royal court and his participation to different assemblies could be retraced. Alongside his own son-in-law, Balthasar Batthyány, he is practically the only one to be portrayed with such detail in late medieval Slavonia.<sup>60</sup> Yet his peers in the families of roughly the same wealth and social prestige, even though impossible to depict so vividly, still have a bigger chance of turning up, by the mere size and scattered nature of their possessions, in a relatively great number of charters. Thus at least the main elements of their careers can be reconstructed and their relative place within local society assessed. But take, for example, the case of Michael Berivojszentiváni (Sveti Ivan Berivoj, *Berywoyzenithiwan*). Although his market town is known from the tax list of 1495, all the references to his *castellum*, to the annual fair held in the town, as well as to his being titled *egregius*, and to his participation in

57 In the following pages, I use the term kindred with reference to the early medieval *genera*, whose existence is attested until the early fifteenth century. In order to avoid confusion, in all other cases I retained the word family to denote those family groups which descended from a single ancestor but were later separated into two or more branches, whether they divided their ancient lands or not. For referring to this "larger" family, kindred may also have been an option, as was done, for instance, by Martyn Rady, *Nobility, Land and Service in Medieval Hungary* (London: Palgrave, 2000), 96. Yet distinction is not entirely clear even there, *genus* sometimes being retained for denoting the early kindreds. The problem was clearly perceived by Fügedi as well (*Elefánthyak*, 8–10), but the solution that he opted for, namely adopting the foreign word clan is not convincing at all. In fact, Rady also refers to the Elefánthy as a kindred: *ibid.*, 97.

58 These charters mainly concern the estate of Garignica, acquired by Balthasar Batthyány in the early 1490s.

59 See below the chapter on the Pekri family.

60 Pálosfalvi, "Grebeni Hermanfi," I–II.

arbitrations, all important indicators of social status, come from the Batthyány archives.<sup>61</sup> Consequently, in case the latter had been lost, he would not be more than a name to us, with no social reality behind. All in all, the source material is rich enough above a certain level for families to disappear altogether from our eyes; nevertheless, it should always be kept in mind that all the information and the conclusions based upon them are heavily biased by the amount and especially the patchiness of the surviving source material.

Alongside the Batthyány archives, all the important collections preserved currently in Croatian and Hungarian archives, which can reasonably be supposed to provide information for the history of Slavonia, have been scrutinized as thoroughly as possible. The county of Körös was served by two places of authentication (*loca credibilia*), the twin chapters of Zagreb and Csázma (Čazma, CRO). Unfortunately, it is the archives of the former which have survived more completely, whereas it was the chapter of Csázma, situated in the county of Körös itself, to which the nobility of this county turned in greater numbers in order to have their legal affairs put to writing. Although, at least in the late fifteenth century, the nobility of Slavonia were required by their own local customs to content themselves with the services of the two Slavonian places of authentication, this rule seems never to have been totally respected, and, consequently, a lot of information about Slavonian-based families can be found dispersed in charters emanating from neighbouring institutions such as the chapters of Pozsega and Pécs, but also the chapter of Buda, for instance. We also know that Slavonian noblemen travelling to the royal court, wherever it was based, frequently profited by their stay there to turn directly to the royal chanceries for charters in everyday administrative affairs as well. This means, of course, that only after the inspection of all charters emanating from the royal court could we say with certainty that we have gathered all relevant information; this effort, however, would surely not be justified by the result.

In the case of noble families which also had possessions outside Slavonia, I tried to gather all the relevant material from other, non-Slavonian collections as well, although it is certain that important pieces have slipped my attention. Moreover, the problem is complicated by the fact that, thanks generally to marriages, parts of the archives of Slavonian families were also transferred to those of other, sometimes geographically distant families. Thus, important charters concerning the Kasztellánfi and Vitéz of Kamarca (*Kamarcha*, Komarnica, CRO) families have been incorporated into the Ostffy archives, whereas others, touching upon the history of the Turóci and Garázda, are now making part of the Niczky archives. Information on Stephen Pekri can be found in charters issued by the chapter of Nyitra (Nitra, SL). Of course, if the marriage partners can be identified by other sources, we have good chances to find the way to these non-Slavonian collections; otherwise it is a matter of

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61 For the references see below the chapter on the Berivojszentiváni.

pure chance. How some of the charters concerning the Kerhen of Belosovc family have finally been integrated into the Balassa archives, is unknown; it is certainly a warning that practically no collection should be left unresearched. As is well known, Hungarian medievalists are extremely fortunate in that practically the entire charter material concerning the territory of the medieval Hungarian kingdom is available in the form of photocopies in the Hungarian National Archives, and these are now even accessible on the internet.<sup>62</sup> Yet for a great part of them only very incomplete abstracts are available, whereas in the case of another, equally numerous group individual inspection is the only means of finding out whether they contain anything valuable for the subject. Nevertheless, it is to be hoped that even the amount of information I have been able to collect is extensive enough for my conclusions to be in need of only slight modifications when all that is still unknown now will come to light in the not too distant future.



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62 [www.mol.arcanum.hu/dldf/opt](http://www.mol.arcanum.hu/dldf/opt), also available through the homepage of the Hungarian National Archives: [www.mol.gov.hu](http://www.mol.gov.hu), accessed July 25, 2014.





## 2. THE NOBILITY AND THEIR HISTORIES

### 2.1. THE NOBILITY IN THE COUNTY OF KÖRÖS: THE CRITERIA OF SELECTION

It is relatively easy to draw the line which separates the *bene possessionati nobiles* from the upper section of the lay nobility, which, not always clearly defined, is called aristocracy in Hungarian scholarship:<sup>1</sup> persons regularly distinguished with the title *magnificus* from the age of Sigismund are naturally excluded from my investigations. Of course, I am conscious that in the first part of the fifteenth century the *magnificus* title is still reserved for those persons who actually hold a baronial office; yet, after the “landslide” of royal donations which followed the accession of king Sigismund (1387), and the consequent emergence of a top group of aristocratic families with thousands of tenant plots spread all over the kingdom, organised into huge castle lordships, the line of division between them and the rest of the nobility is fairly clear.<sup>2</sup> With regard to the county of Körös, with one notable exception (Orbona [Obrovnica, CRO]), the presence of these persons/families was attached to the fortifications of the county generally referred to as *castrum*, around which the greatest estates of the county were grouped. Although, as we will see, the possession of a *castrum* was not exclusively confined to the barons, the overwhelming majority of these buildings was in their hands throughout the period, which underlines the difference of a social nature between *castrum* and *castellum* in the late middle ages. Moreover, most of the barons, for whom the term magnates is probably more appropriate from the

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1 In the absence of a titled nobility of the English type, it is always a matter of individual judgement which families are treated as belonging to the aristocracy in a social sense. Fügedi (*Mobilitás*, 1), regards the aristocracy in the fifteenth century as “the top layer of the ruling class,” which includes the holders of the chief offices and their families. Yet, as Pál Engel remarked, it is only from the very end of the fifteenth century “that one can speak, in the legal sense, of a hereditary class of magnates in Hungary.” Cf. Engel, *Realm of St Stephen*, 342. Again, the problem is not limited to Hungary. For England in the late middle ages see Carpenter, *Locality and Polity*, 35.

2 On this see Pál Engel, *Királyi hatalom és arisztokrácia viszonya a Zsigmond-korban* [The Relationship between the Royal Power and the Aristocracy in the Age of Sigismund] (Budapest: Akadémiai, 1977). Although the term itself (*magnates*) appears only later in the fifteenth century, Pál Engel uses it with reference to the late Angevin and early Sigismund era as well (Engel, *Realm of St Stephen*, 188, 207).

second half of the fifteenth century, who owned the castles in the county of Körös, also had extensive possessions in Hungary proper, and visited only sporadically, if at all, their Slavonian estates. The counts of Cilli (Celje, SLO) (Rakonok [Rakovac, CRO], Kemlék [Veliki/Mali Kalnik, CRO], Szentgyörgy [Đurđevac, CRO] and Kóvár [Stari Grad, Koprivnica, CRO]), the Tallóci brothers (Szentgyörgy),<sup>3</sup> the Maróti (Velike [Kraljeva Velika, CRO], Vasmegyerice [Međurić, CRO], Valpó [Valpovo, CRO])<sup>4</sup>, Újlaki (Racsá [Rača, CRO], Raholca [Orahovica, CRO], Kontovc [Kontovac, CRO], Berzőce [Stara Brezovica, CRO], Szenterzsébet [Jugovo Polje, CRO]), Garai (Atyina [Voćin, CRO], Szaplonca [Stupčanica, CRO]), Móroc of Meggyesalja (Zdenc [Zdenci, CRO]), Drágfi (Vasmegyerice), Ernuszt (Szentgyörgy and its appurtenances), Bátori (Zdenc), Kórógyi (Darnóc [Drenovac, CRO]) Beriszló (Fejérkő [Bijela Stijena, CRO]), Egervári (Kemlék, Velike), Kanizsai (Velike, Vasmegyerice), Bánfi of Alsólindva (Szaplonca), Geréb, Perényi (Valpó) families as well as Benedict Batthyány (Atyina) and duke John Corvin (Rakonok and Kemlék) all held the most important offices of the realm,<sup>5</sup> were ever more frequently referred to as *magnates*, and many among them (Újlaki, Bátori, Geréb, Bánfi, Drágfi, Kanizsai, Ernuszt, Perényi, Móroc, Egervári, Beriszló) were legally separated from the bulk of the nobility by the law of 1498.<sup>6</sup> It is highly illustrative that, with two exceptions, none of the castles and estates

3 The Tallóci family is an interesting case which illustrates the difficulties of approaching Hungarian noble society in terms of social stratification. Originally from a family of merchants, probably from the Dalmatian island of Korčula, they rose meteorically in the last decade of the reign of king Sigismund, holding important offices and controlling dozens of castles all along the southern marches of the kingdom. Yet, in terms of personal wealth, they were certainly not richer than many among the well-to-do nobility who never left their native region. After the acquisition of the huge estate of Szentgyörgy, the situation changed, and their sociopolitical status was then in keeping with their landed wealth for some time; but, after 1445, and especially after 1448, when they lost Szentgyörgy, and alienated the majority of their remaining possessions, the surviving members of the family sank again into the ranks of the well-to-do county nobility. (For some time they remained counts of Cetina, in the Kingdom of Croatia, but this had apparently no practical implications with regard to their situation in Hungary, where they were no more accorded the *magnificus* title before 1526.) Thus, it would be strictly impossible to find one category into which to squeeze the entire history of the family. In any case, since after 1448 their landed wealth was confined to the county of Verőce, they do not concern us here. See Elemér Mályusz, "A négy Tallóci fivér" [The Four Tallóci Brothers], *Történelmi Szemle* 23, no. 4 (1980): 531–576; Tamás Pálosfalvi, "Die Familie Tallóci im Mittelalter," in *Lajos Thallóczy der Historiker und Politiker*, ed. Dževad Juzbašić and Imre Ress (Sarajevo–Budapest: n.p., 2010), 183–90.

4 Although the castle of Valpó itself was situated in the county of Baranya, the majority of its appurtenances lay in that of Körös.

5 See Csánki, *Körösmegye*, passim. For the information concerning their officeholding see Engel, *Archontológia*, under the different names, and also the archontological lists in Fügedi, *Mobilitás*, 105–24.

6 For the list see Pál Engel, "A magyar világi nagybirtok megoszlása a 15. században" [The Distribution of the Landed Wealth of the Secular Nobility in Fifteenth-Century Hungary] I–II, in idem, *Honor, vár, ispánság*, 46–47.

enumerated above ever came into the hands of non-baronial local families before 1526;<sup>7</sup> they were either donated to already well-established magnates or used to found the material fortunes of persons freshly elevated to a baronial status (Ernusz, Egervári). The only link attaching them to the county of Körös (unless they were at the same time bans of Slavonia) was that they employed, at least partly, local noblemen as their *familiares* governing their castles and leading their troops. It is only in this last respect that they will concern us in our investigation of the rich nobility in the county of Körös.<sup>8</sup> Although open to debate, I also counted among the barons John, son of Juga from the Polish Szteszew family, a kinsman of voevode Stibor, whose estate of Racsa with the castle there devolved upon Nicholas Újlaki.<sup>9</sup> I did the same with the Erdődi (Ardud, RO) family, who inherited the lands of the Csupor and the Rohfi in the last decade of the fifteenth century; although Valentine and Peter Erdődi were generally titled merely *egregius*, as the nephews of cardinal Bakóc they certainly belonged already to the aristocracy of the realm, and owned land in several counties outside Körös.<sup>10</sup>

Below this level things are much less clearcut, however. The authors cited above proposed roughly four criteria along which it is possible to separate the group of “*nagybirtokos*” nobility from the rest of noble society: the more or less regular attribution of the *egregius* title, a given number of tenant plots, the possession of one or more fortifications, and access to the royal court. The simplest way would have been to start with, as Pál Engel did, a tax register enumerating all the nobility and the number of their tenant plots in the county of Körös. Unfortunately, in Slavonia we have no early registers comparable to the source used by Engel, which would go back to the end of the fourteenth century. The first source of this type is the tax list of 1495, which enumerates all the four administrative districts (*processus*) of Körös county. It is, however, undeniably a very late source, and has special problems of its own, to be discussed later on.<sup>11</sup>

Although, as we will see later, the possession of fortifications is an important and useful indicator of noble wealth, it nevertheless involves problems of terminology, chronology and identification.<sup>12</sup> These problems are

7 The two exceptions are Kemlék, which was donated to Balthasar Alapi by duke Corvin, and Vasmegyericse, which was possessed by the Paksi family for a decade between 1479 and 1489.

8 On this see below the chapter on *familiaritas*.

9 See Daniela Dvořáková, *A lovag és királya. Stiborici Stibor és Luxemburgi Zsigmond* [The Knight and his King. Stibor of Stiboric and Sigismund of Luxemburg] (Pozsony: Kalligram, 2009), 389.

10 Vilmos Fraknói, *Erdődi Bakócz Tamás élete 1442–1521* [The Life of Thomas Bakócz of Erdőd 1442–1521] (Budapest: Méhner Vilmos, 1889), part II, chapter V on the acquisitions of the archbishop-chancellor in Slavonia and elsewhere.

11 Josip Adamček and Ivan Kampuš, eds., *Popisi i obračuni poreza u Hrvatskoj u XV i XVI stoljeću* [Tax Lists and Accounts from Croatia in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries] (Zagreb: Institut za Hrvatsku Povijest, 1976), 7–15. On the problems of its use see below pp. 40–42.

12 On the architectural, terminological and social problems presented by the different kinds of fortifications see chapter 3.2 below.

further complicated by the fact that from the early fifteenth century the county of Körös was one of the regions most exposed to Ottoman raids, as a result of which the emphasis shifted to the defensive capacities of fortifications from their function as symbols of social position.<sup>13</sup> Similar problems emerge with regard to the access of the nobility to the royal court as an indication of “social preeminence”. The function and form of the royal court was transformed profoundly between the death of king Sigismund and 1526, and so were the forms and ways of noble interaction with it.<sup>14</sup> Moreover, this aspect of noble activity is very difficult to grasp, and most exposed to the historian’s luck with his/her sources, and as such not an ideal starting point for the kind of investigation I intended to carry out.

Consequently, I decided to start with the fourth criterion, namely to gather all the persons titled *egregius* independently of any office in the charters between the emergence of this honorific title in the first third of the fifteenth century<sup>15</sup> and 1526.<sup>16</sup> This approach, as against the other three, is justified in

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- 13 It must have been the constant, and ever increasing, Ottoman menace which had led by the early sixteenth century to the official acknowledgment of the right of each Slavonian nobleman to erect a *castellum* on his own possessions (MNL OL, DL 94 811 [1515]: “unusquisque nobilium erigendi [...] castella in bonis suis ex vetusta regni consuetudine liberam habet potestatis facultatem,” and compare DL 104 278). The adjective “old” was attached as a matter of fact to all customs held by the nobility, regardless of their real age. I will return to the defensive functions of *castella* in chapter 3.2. On the problem of Ottoman influence see Borislav Grgin, “The Ottoman influences on Croatia in the second half of the fifteenth century,” *Povijesni prilozi* 23 (2002): 87–103, esp. 93–94.
  - 14 There is no special study devoted to the function of the royal court as a place of interaction between the king and the nobility “as a centre of patronage and service” (Harris, *Shaping the Nation*, 22) in the later middle ages. I will set out in detail the lines of development which emerged from the investigation of the nobility in Körös in chapter 3.4.
  - 15 The title appears in Slavonia in the 1420s, and spreads rapidly from the 1430s, which seems to be in keeping with the “national” trends. See Engel, *Ung megye*, 97.
  - 16 I have left out of consideration the charters from the very end of the period, among them the rich *protocollum* of the chapter of Csázma (MNL OL, DF 277 175), for these reflect a clear inflation of the title, which is attributed to persons whose ancestors never bore it, and whose social situation, unlike in the preceding period, by no means justifies the attribution of the title even after thorough examination. Thus, in 1519 for instance, John Tahi, Michael Tomadovci, Christopher Tomadovci, John Csezmicei, John Bornemisza of Zebenyanc, Gregory Temerjei, Paul Mocsilai and Ladislav Vitéz of Kamarca are designated as royal men, all of them comprised by the title *egregii* (MNL OL, DF 209 458); some of them, such as John Tahi and Ladislav Vitéz will concern us below, as they are revealed by other sources to have been more prominent than the rest. The others, however, emerge at most as *szolgabírák*, and their inclusion, together with dozens of others who turn up with the title in the 1510s and 1520s, would have greatly encumbered the text. This, of course, involved a pre-selection already based on the knowledge of the entire source material. Anyway, I only use these references in case I have found corroborative information in other, earlier sources, or if other indications of social prestige support them. This phenomenon of inflation, which equally affected the notions of *castrum* and *castellum* for instance, can also be observed elsewhere, but especially after 1526. Whether it was already connected to the basically post-Mohács emergence of the so-called “*vitézlő nép*”, has yet to be examined. On the latter see Zsigmond

so far as it is based upon recorded contemporary observation.<sup>17</sup> During the reconstruction of the list I ignored the fact whether the title was used merely once or several times, partly because of the unequal repartition of the sources, partly because some detailed case studies have convinced me that the attribution of the title was *never* accidental. Of course, the use of this criterion as a means of selection is no less free of difficulties than that of the other three. Firstly, as Pál Engel stated with regard to the *magister* title, “its use, as that of all titles of prestige, was never consistent, and adapted itself to the varying social circumstances”.<sup>18</sup> Since, however, the great majority of the charters upon which my collection was based emanated either from the royal court or from the local places of authentication, their relative value is roughly the same. Another, more serious problem, as we have already seen, is the consequence of the patchy survival of our sources. Thus, whereas those families whose lands and archives were later incorporated into the Batthyány domain, have a much greater chance of turning up in our charters with the *egregius* title, greater numbers in this case do not necessarily mean greater social prestige.<sup>19</sup> Thirdly, since the title was as a rule given not only to the vicebans and deputy prothonotaries, but also, for instance, to the castellans of the major baronial castles, it is always possible that a person called *egregius* was given the title by reason of an office otherwise unknown to us. And finally, the attribution of the title seems to have been subjected to particular considerations which remain beyond our comprehension.<sup>20</sup>

All in all we find almost a hundred families and persons for the whole period between cca. 1420 and 1526 who can thus be involved in the

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Pál Pach et al., eds., *Magyarország története 1526–1686* [The History of Hungary 1526–1686], vols. I–II (Budapest: Akadémiai, 1987), vol. I, 389; Géza Pálffy, *A tizenhatodik század története* [The History of the Sixteenth Century] (Budapest: Pannonica, 2000), 154–60.

17 “sine proceribus nobilium, quales egregios vulgo vocamus, quales eciam in uno comitatu vix duo vel tres sunt,” cited by András Kubinyi, “A kaposújvári uradalom és a Somogy megyei familiárisok szerepe Újlaki Miklós birtokpolitikájában” [The Role of the Estate of Kaposújvár and the Familiares in Somogy county in the Territorial Policies of Nicholas Újlaki], in *Somogy megye múltjából. Levéltári évkönyv*, ed. József Kanyar (Kaposvár: Somogy Megyei Levéltár, 1973), 35, in note 18.

18 Engel, *Ung megye*, 97.

19 Thus, whereas in the case of Ladislás Hermanfi of Greben or his adopted son, Balthasar Batthyány, we have several dozens of instances of their being titled *egregius*, in the most various contexts, for several members of the Pekri family from the Petrovinai branch we have to content ourselves with a handful of references, or only one or two, which, of course, by no means indicates a social difference of the same order.

20 For instance, in 1493, when an inquisition is held in the county of Körös, Peter Bocskai is accorded the *egregius* title, whereas his kinsmen, Sigismund and Nicholas, who otherwise also regularly receive it, are titled simply *nobilis*. Similarly, Peter Gudovci, George Kapitánfi and Stephen Gorbonoki do receive the title, but Francis Pekri does not, although he is not denied it otherwise (MNL OL, DF 233 293). It is impossible to know what lays behind such distinctions.

investigation.<sup>21</sup> This, albeit certainly incomplete, is undeniably a huge number, even with the restrictions to be set forth below. Engel found only two families in the county of Ung who were decorated with the *egregius* title before 1437,<sup>22</sup> whereas Tibor Neumann counted some eight families in that of Nyitra which fell into the same category at the end of the middle ages.<sup>23</sup> Of course, these roughly one hundred families and persons were not all simultaneously

21 The following persons receive the title with reference to some possession in the county of Körös (the families follow each other in alphabetical order, all the persons listed within each family): Balthasar *Alapi*, Lawrence *Bánfi* of Gara, Balthasar *Batthyány*, Michael *Berivojszentiváni*, George and Peter *Bikszádi* (Bisag, CRO), Ladislás, John, Sigismund, Peter and Nicholas *Bocskai* of Keresztúr (Rasinja, CRO), Nicholas *Borotva* of Tersztenice, Elias *Bosnyák* of Businc (Buščinac, CRO), Blaise and Andrew *Budor* of Budrovc (Budrovac, CRO), Peter *Butkai*, Paul *Čavlović* of Gyurkovc, Caspar *Csernarekai*, John *Csezmicei*, Nicholas, Caspar, George and Stephen *Csupor* of Monoszló (Moslavina, CRO), Leonard *Dacsó* of Őr, Ladislás *Darabos* of Nádasd, Martin, Stephen and Nicholas *Ders(fi)* of Szerdahely, George *Diakói*, Nicholas, Francis, David and John *Dombai*, Stephen *Doroszlai*, Ladislás, Stanislas, Nicholas and Akacius *Ervencei*, Bartholomew, Ladislás, Frank, Peter and Emeric *Fáncs* of Gordova (Grđevac, CRO), Peter *Fintics* of Poljana, Gregory *Fodorovci*, Wolfgang and Sigismund *Frodnacher* of Bednya (Bednja, CRO), Paul *Garázda* of Keresztúr, Anthony, Peter, and Nicholas *Gereci*, John and Francis *Geszti*, Thomas, Nicholas, Briccus, Emeric and Stephen *Gorbonoki*, Herman, George, John, Andrew and Ladislás *Grebeni*, Peter and Stephen *Gudovci* (Gudovac, CRO), John *Gyulai*, Stephen *Hásságyi*, Balthasar *Hobetić*, Gregory *Horváth* of Gáj (Gay), Vitus *Horváth* of Szeglak, John *Vitéz*, Vitus and Akacius *Garazda*, Nicholas of *Kamarca*, Andrew, Stephen, George, Vitus and Sylvester *Kapitánfi* of Desnice (Dišnik, CRO), Nicholas (2), Caspar, Akacius, George and John *Kasztellánfi*, Francis *Kecer* of Radvány, George and Paul *Kerecsényi*, Michael, Peter and Nicholas *Kerhen* of Belosovc, John *Kishorvát*, Anthony and John *Kopinci*, Matthias *Kustyer*, Peter *Lacovich* of Butinc, Michael *Latk* of Berstyanóc (Bršljanica, CRO), Albert *Lónyai*, George *Ludbregi* (Ludbreg, CRO), Nicholas and Frederick *Lusicky* of Dobrakucsa, Frank, Emeric, Francis, Bernard and Stephen *Megyericsei* (Međurača, CRO), Peter *Miksec* of Cirkvena, Nicholas *Mindszenti*, Alexander (Sandrin) *Musinai* (Šandrovac, CRO), Simon *Nagy* of Szentmárton, Paul, Dominic, Ladislás, David, Nicholas, Benedict and Francis *Nelepec* of Dobrakucsa, Nicholas *Orros* of Orrosovc, John and Francis *Ost(fi)*, Nicholas *Ördög* of Prodaviz (Virje, CRO), Bernard *Ördög* of Vragovc, George and Ladislás *Ósi*, Michael *Paksi*, Valentine and Nicholas *Pálfi* of Szentmihály, Paul *Pan* of Kravarina, Albert, Nicholas and George *Pataki*, Christoph *Paschingar*, Ladislás *Paska* of Pasinc, John *Pechiban* of Chomorag, Ladislás, Nicholas, Francis, Stephen, John, Louis (2) *Pekri*, Thomas and Gregory *Safar* of *Pestenye* (Pistana, CRO), Francis and Thomas *Pető* of Gerse, George *Piers*, Anthony *Pocsaji* of Namény, Sigismund *Pogány*, Nicholas *Pozsegai*, Martin and John *Predrihoi* (Gornje Predrijevo, CRO), Michael (2) *Raveni* (Raven CRO), Ladislás, John, Michael and Bernard *Roh* of Dèce, Stephen *Rohonci* (Rechnitz, AU), Oswald *Rumi*, Viola and Francis *Sabatinus* of Garignica, John *Stefekfi* of Temenica, George *Županić* of Prezecsnafo, Nicholas *Székely* of Kövend (Plăiești, RO), Ladislás, John, George and Francis *Szencsei*, Nicholas and John *Szerecsen* of Kristallóc (Kreštelovac, CRO), Louis and Francis *Szerecsen* of Mesztegnyő, John *Tahi*, Anthony *Tarko* of Kristallóc, Valentine *Terbenyei* (Turbina, CRO), Michael *Tompa* of Horzova (Hrsovo, CRO), Tulbert and Nicholas *Tulbertfi* of Berstyanóc (Brštanovac), Benedict and Bernard *Turóci*, John *Vitovec*, Nicholas *Vizaknai* (Ocna Sibiului, RO), Ladislás *Zalai*.

22 Engel, *Ung megye*, 97, n. 409.

23 Neumann, *Korlátkövek*, 9. It is true that the title *egregius dominus*, examined by Neumann, was somewhat more illustrious than *egregius* alone. In my analysis I paid no attention to this difference.



present in the county of Körös: many of them arrived in the course of the fifteenth century, whereas others disappeared during the same period. This phenomenon will constitute the object of a separate investigation later on. Moreover, some of them played such an ephemeral role in the region that their existence there can safely be left out of consideration. Thus, before all, the Lusicky family, who possessed the estate of Dobrakúcsa (Dobra Kuća, CRO) for some years,<sup>24</sup> or Stephen Doroszlai, who owned that of Szobocsina (*Zobochina*), likewise for a very limited period,<sup>25</sup> or the Italian Sabatinus Viola, husband of the nurse of queen Beatrix, who was donated by king Matthias the estate of Garignica but sold it within a couple of years.<sup>26</sup> Simon Nagy of Szentmárton seems to have been a *familiaris* of John Hunyadi in Slavonia; he obtained half of the estate of Kristallóc in 1453, but lost it only three years later, and left the region for all thereafter.<sup>27</sup> Another man settled by Hunyadi in Slavonia for political reasons was Nicholas Vizaknai, deputy-governor of Transylvania, who received the important estates of George Ludbregi in 1452 through adoption, and seems indeed to have taken possession of them, but soon disappeared from Slavonia.<sup>28</sup> Anthony Pocsaji of Namény, apparently a similar creature of John Hunyadi, will turn up briefly below together with the Lónyai.

Others, who possessed land in the county of Körös for a more protracted period, seem nevertheless to have remained socially or in terms of their landed wealth attached to other regions of medieval Hungary, and cannot consequently be regarded as belonging to the nobility of the county. Of course, to define who were regarded or who regarded themselves as belonging to the noble community of any given county is one of the most intricate problems. On a very basic level, a necessary precondition was to have some land there;<sup>29</sup> yet it is evident that not all people with land in Körös were connected with the same ties to the local noble community. Obviously, there is no trouble with those who owned the whole or the majority of their landed wealth in Körös, for in their case the problem of multiple affinities does not even emerge. But if we take the example of the Fánics of Gordova, which is far from isolated, we see that at least two thirds of their lands were situated in Somogy, at least one of them even assumed the office of alispán there, and another acted as envoy

24 See below the chapter on the Nelepec.

25 Between 1489 and 1491: Pálosfalvi, "Grebeni Hermanfi," I, 856.

26 Ibid., I, 858–63. His son, Francis, later served queen Beatrix as her *provisor curie* of the castle of Diósgyőr. Cf. Albert Berzeviczy, *Beatrix királyné (1457–1508). Történelmi élet- és korrajz* [Queen Beatrix (1457–1508). A Historical Portrait of her Life and Times] (Budapest: Magyar Történelmi Társulat, 1908), 388 and note, where the date of the charter is mistaken; it was issued on 26 August 1495 (MNL OL, DF 270 765).

27 Although his widow and son tried to reobtain it in the 1460s. On Simon Nagy see Pálosfalvi, "Vitovec János," 436–39.

28 MNL OL, DL 14 558, DF 255 746.

29 MNL OL, DF 233 293: "habens nobilitatem in comitatu Crisiensi," here nobility being equivalent to landowning.

sent by the same county to the general assembly. Yet they were always called of their Slavonian possession of Gordova, where they seem to have kept their residence, were regularly listed among the representatives of the Slavonian nobility, and also held the office of viceban and *ispán* of Körös. They were thus in all probability regarded as belonging to the noble community of Körös.<sup>30</sup> In other cases the situation is by no means so evident, however.

It was, consequently, necessary to elaborate a number of criteria by which to judge dubious cases. The first approach is based on names. That is, if an individual is at least sometimes called of a locality in Körös, he is reasonably supposed to have stayed there with some regularity. Thus, whereas Sigismund Pogány, although he was as continuously absent from Slavonia as the Paksi, and had as much land outside the province as they did, was sometimes called of Herbortya (Veliki Poganac, CRO),<sup>31</sup> and so were his father, Emeric, and brother, John, none of the members of the Paksi family was ever called of either Vasmegyericse or Sukanc (*Schwkanecz*). Another approach is based on the regular involvement in the internal affairs of the county concerned, which, in our case, evidently means Slavonia of which the county of Körös was the main constituent.<sup>32</sup> Thus, members of the Dombai and Batthyány families, while always continued to be called of their places of origin in the counties of Somogy and Fejér respectively, and retained their lands there, turn up regularly in the common affairs of the Slavonian nobility, which proves that they were effectively accepted as belonging to it. Thus, with very few exceptions to be explained below, I counted as members of the nobility of Körös those families whose members turn up as vicebans, Slavonian tax collectors, deputies to the general assembly delegated from either Körös or from Slavonia in general, or as mere participants to any collective activities of the Slavonian nobility as a corporate body. All this is evidently open to criticism, but decisions had to be taken; unfortunately, this aspect of medieval noble life in Hungary is one of those problems which have never been systematically treated in Hungarian historiography so far.<sup>33</sup>

Even so, there are exceptions, some omissions need more detailed justification, and some cases are extremely difficult to decide, whatever the qualifications. Already complicated is the case of the Geszti family, from the

30 For the references see the chapter on the Fáncs family below.

31 Originally called after Herbord of the Osli kindred, its present Croatian name derives from the Hungarian name Pogány. The village in which, as we will see below, the fortification called Herbortya stood, namely Oslovc, borrowed its name from the kindred itself (Osli).

32 Here as elsewhere, I use the term "county of Körös" in a political sense as almost synonymous with Slavonia. The framework for the political activities of the élite nobility of the county of Körös in the late middle ages was constituted by Slavonia itself, be it as vicebans, tax collectors or envoys and representatives of whatever kind.

33 Similar criteria were adopted by Christine Carpenter in order to determine who could be regarded as belonging to the gentry community of late medieval Warwickshire (*Locality and Polity*, 37): they "should have had at least some fragment of manorial lordship" there "and taken some part in the affairs of the county."



county of Bodrog, who owned the estate of Szentjakab (Sveti Jakob, *Zenthjacab*) and a *castellum* there, also a portion of Csezmicse (*Chezmiche*), and one of them was even viceban in the 1470s.<sup>34</sup> Nevertheless, they seem never to have resided there, and the bulk of their lands lay outside Slavonia; it is no wonder, then, that they were never listed among the representatives of the Slavonian nobility, a further proof that they were not regarded as such. Yet if we follow the history of their Slavonian possessions into the sixteenth century, we come across a certain Alexius (Elek) Mór , who by 1517 had taken over Szentjakab, and already four years before is attested as a landowner at Csezmicse as well.<sup>35</sup> Since he inherited the lawsuit which opposed the Batthy ny and the Geszti because of Szentjakab, and he turns up in the case as Alexius M r  of Dada,<sup>36</sup> his identification becomes easy: he came from the M r  of Dada family in the county of Szabolcs, and inherited the Geszti lands in K r s through his marriage with Anne, presumably the daughter of John Geszti.<sup>37</sup> In 1507 he was isp n and castellan of the royal castle of Di sgy r.<sup>38</sup> He is not known to have resided in Slavonia before his death sometime prior to 1521. But his case is important as a warning that persons otherwise regularly titled *egregius*, holding important offices, and owning considerable land in K r s may nevertheless remain “invisible” to us if we concentrate solely on the local charter material.

The B nfi of Gara (Gorjani, CRO) (of the Dorozsma kindred), who descended from Desiderius (Dezs ) Garai, ban of Macs  (Ma va, SRB), and Kishorv t of Hlap   families, the latter newcomers from Croatia, owned the castle of Darn c from the 1420s and 1470s respectively.<sup>39</sup> Although no member of either family was ever titled *magnificus*, and they held no baronial office, and would thus qualify for the target group, they also possessed extensive landed wealth in the county of Valk  (Vukovar, CRO),<sup>40</sup> and nothing shows that they were ever regarded as belonging to the noble community of K r s in any sense; anyway, the B nfi, related to the baronial Garai family, must generally have appeared as magnates to many, especially locally, although their landed wealth did not considerably exceed that of the Batthy ny, for instance, in the 1490s.<sup>41</sup> The case of John Vitovec himself is certainly to be

34 On the origins of the Geszti family and their relationship to the Gyulai see Andr s Kubinyi, “Ernusz Zsigmond p csi p sp k rejt lyes hal la  s hagyat k nak sorsa” [The Mysterious Death of Sigismund Ernusz, Bishop of P cs, and the Fate of his Inheritance], *S z dak* 135 (2001): 328–29.

35 Adam ek–Kampu , *Popisi*, 61, 99.

36 MNL OL, DL 101 427.

37 MNL OL, DL 23 572; Engel, *K z p ri magyar geneal gia*, Gy r nem 1.  v ri- g 2. t bla: Gyulai.

38 MNL OL, DL 21 756, DL 46 827, here as of Dada.

39 Engel, *Archontol gia*, vol. I, 297–98; Cs nki, *K r smegye*, 53–54.

40 Dezs  Cs nki, *Magyarorsz g t rt nelmi  ldrajza a Hunyadiak kor ban* [The Historical Geography of Hungary in the Age of the Hunyadi], vol. II of V (Budapest, 1890–1913), 371.

41 Their possessions are extensively listed in MNL OL, DF 265 809 (1507): the castles of Darn c and Nartszentmikl s in K r s, the *castella* of Szlakovc (Slakovci, south of Vukovar, CRO),

treated separately: even as a viceban, at the same time the mercenary captain of the counts of Cilli, he was positioned far above the nobility of Körös, and after 1457 he quickly entered the baronage, of which his sons also remained members.<sup>42</sup> I also ignored Nicholas Ördög of Pölöske, great grandson of the famous ban Mikcs from the Ákos kindred, who recovered the huge estate of Szentgyörgy in 1425, but lost it ten years later and completely disappeared from Slavonia thereafter.<sup>43</sup> Likewise left out of consideration was the Ludbregi family, descendants of ban John Csúz, who seem to have faded into obscurity after their estate of Ludbreg, together with their other lands in the counties of Zagreb and Sopron, had been pledged to Andrew Rohonci in 1421.<sup>44</sup>

An interesting and controversial case is that of the Székely of Kövend family. Although sometimes receiving the *magnificus* title, they were regularly titled *egregius*, and possessed the important estate of Dobrakucs in Körös, whose name they even bore sometimes. Yet they also obtained the estate of Friedau (Hung. Ormosd) in Styria (now Ormož, SLO), of which they even became the (titular) barons, and they seem to have held their residence there. Moreover, while being influential members of the court of both Matthias and his Jagiellonian successors, they do not appear to have showed any interest in the internal affairs of Slavonia before 1526.<sup>45</sup> It was for this reason that I

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Cerna (Cerna, CRO), Kosztormánszentdénés (Kostroman, CRO) and Gara in Valkó, the *castellum* of Kisdarnóc (Brodski Drenovac, CRO) in Pozsega, and several possessions in Bács, with all their appurtenances. As a matter of fact, the Bánfi of Gara are treated among the aristocratic families by Pál Engel as well ("Magyar világi nagybirtok," 31). Similar ambiguities are encountered also by historians of the late medieval English aristocracy, where "family history, lands, lifestyles and connections" can justify putting some families with the peerage instead of the gentry, while not belonging to the titled nobility. See Carpenter, *Locality and Polity*, 35.

42 Pálosfalvi, "Vitovec János," *passim*.

43 Engel, *Archontológia*, vol. I, 426. Nicholas Ördög of Pölöske was still struggling to regain the estate from the Ernuszt brothers as late as 1495: MNL OL, DF 231 190.

44 Engel, *Archontológia*, vol. I, 363; Elemér Mályusz et al., eds., *Zsigmondkori Oklevéltár* [Charters from the Age of Sigismund], vol. VII of 12 (Budapest: Magyar Országos Levéltár, 1951–2013), nos. 861, 1933.

45 James Székely, captain of Radkersburg and Pettau (today Ptuj, SLO) before and after 1490, imperial councillor (for Maximilian of Habsburg); his brother, Nicholas, courtier, captain of the royal *aulici*, then ban of Jajce, and royal *familiaris*. See András Kubinyi, *Matthias Rex* (Budapest: Balassi, 2008), 104, 142, 149, 155 (on James); Idem, "Bárók a királyi tanácsban Mátyás és II. Ulászló idejében" [Barons in the Royal Council in the Time of Kings Matthias and Wladislaw II], *Századok* 122 (1988): 210, MNL OL, DL 94 603, DL 37 728, DL 94 640, DL 94 802 (on Nicholas). Both James and Nicholas date their letters mostly from Friedau/Ormosd (MNL OL, DF 258 417, DL 37 727, DL 46 502, DL 70 085); in 1499 Nicholas, in a charter again dated at Ormosd, calls his brother "magnificum dominum Jacobum Zekel de Kewend dominum in Ormosd" (MNL OL, DL 37 728). James referred to himself as "Jacob Zegkl vonn Kewend herr zu Fridau" (MNL OL, DL 94 614). On the other hand, I know of only one letter issued by Nicholas Székely at Dobrakucs (MNL OL, DL 94 668), but this was during his officeholding as ban of Jajce, when he is reasonably supposed to have stayed sometimes in his Slavonian castle. They are indeed sometimes called of their Slavonian estate, when their

excluded them from the scope of the present research. John Gyulai, who descended from the Győr kindred, and whose lands lay in the county of Baranya, acquired some property in the county of Körös thanks to his lord, duke John Corvin. He owned the estate of Kustyerolc (Gušćerovec, CRO) for a mere two years in the early 1490s, whereas that of Dubovc (Dubovac, CRO) became his property definitively in the first decade of the next century. Nevertheless, his greatest acquisitions, the castles of Vinica (Vinica, CRO) and Trakostyán (Trakošćan, CRO), as well as the *castellum* of Kamenica (Kamenica, CRO), all lay in the county of Varasd, the alispán of which he was in the service of margrave George of Brandenburg. Consequently, I neglected him despite the fact that in 1495 he was duke Corvin's deputy in Slavonia, although the local nobility protested forcefully.<sup>46</sup> The situation is very much the same with the Szerecsen of Mesztegyő family, of Italian origins. They owned the castle of Döbrököz in the county of Tolna, and the town of Mesztegyő in that of Somogy, before obtaining the important estates of Zagylca (Čađavica, CRO) and Szuhamlaka (Suhamlaka, CRO) in Körös in the late fifteenth century. Peter Szerecsen was the Slavonian viceban of Nicholas Újlaki in the early 1460s, without apparently having a single parcel of land there, and thirty years later Louis Szerecsen once acted as tax collector in Slavonia. Yet, since they were attached by both the majority of their lands and their social relations to the counties north of the Drava, there seemed to be no reason to include them into the analysis.<sup>47</sup> Again, the Paksi family had possessed the estate of Bradna (Mala/Velika Branjska, CRO), perhaps since the thirteenth century, to which by the middle of the fifteenth century was added the *castellum* of Szentlászló (*Zenthlazlo*), and owned the estate of Vasmegyericse for a decade before the death of king Matthias.<sup>48</sup> As late as 1507 still some 60 tenant plots were listed in their hands at Sukanc.<sup>49</sup> Nevertheless, and despite the fact that

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people there were involved in a legal case (eg. MNL OL, DF 255 922, DL 34 147). In these same charters they are titled *magnificus*, and see also MNL OL, DL 34 249, DL 33 232. With one exception, to which I will return later, they apparently only appear in Slavonia as representatives of the royal will sent to the Slavonian estates, as, for instance, Nicholas in 1504 (MNL OL, DF 268 164); the same can be observed with regard to John Paksi.

46 On the Gyulai family see Kubinyi, "Ernusz Zsigmond," 327–39.

47 On the Szerecsen see *ibid.*, 339–52.

48 Csánki, *Körösmegye*, 40.

49 For Bradna, see *Zsigmondkori Oklevéltár*, vol. IX, no. 690. It belonged perhaps originally to the castle lordship of Kemlék, which was held by palatine Lorand, ancestor of the Paksi family, in the late thirteenth century. See János Karácsonyi, *A magyar nemzetségek a XIV. század közepéig* [The Hungarian Noble Kindreds until the Middle of the Fourteenth Century] (Budapest: Magyar Tudományos Akadémia, 1900), 927. For Sukanc see Adamček–Kampuš, *Popisi*, 30. Sukanc had a church dedicated to Saint Ladislav, and was situated near Lesnek, later Lesnekhegy (Sloboština), owned by the Hospitallers of Vrana (Csánki, *Körösmegye*, 78). *Lesnek alio nomine Zabadfalu*, the latter with a Saint Ladislav church (MNL OL, DL 33 744 [1295]), originally belonged to the Szencsei family. It is certainly there that the *castellum* called Szentlászló, attested in the possession of Emeric Paksi, stood (Engel, *Archontológia*, vol. I, 427). I was unable to find out how and when the Paksi acquired it.

Louis Paksi did appear at least occasionally at Vasmegyericse when the *castellum* was theirs in the 1480s,<sup>50</sup> they do not seem to have showed any interest in the affairs of Slavonia,<sup>51</sup> and were rather attached to Hungary proper, where the majority of their landed property lay. Part of Sukanc was later acquired by George Sztrazsemljei (Stražeman, CRO), who also possessed some of the Kasztellánfi lands, and the castle and estate of Csáktornya (Čaklovac, CRO), which belonged to the priory of Vrana.<sup>52</sup> Ban of Jajce in the first decade of the sixteenth century, he was a nobleman from the neighbouring county of Pozsega,<sup>53</sup> however, and nothing is known about his activities in Slavonia. The Rumi brothers, members of a fairly well-to-do noble family from the county of Vas, possessed a noble house at Doroszlóbakva (*Dorozlobakwa*) in the early sixteenth century, and probably earlier, but nothing else seems to have attached them to Slavonia.<sup>54</sup> And, finally, another interesting case which is similar to that of Alexius Móré in some way. The Szentgróti family, from the neighbouring county of Zala, and the Hagymás of Berekszó (Beregsău Mare, RO), originally from that of Temes (Timiș, RO), possessed jointly the estate of Zlavina/Zlanya (Slanje, CRO) in the northwestern corner of Körös right into the second half of the fifteenth century, yet no member of either family ever turns up with the *egregius* title in connection with this Slavonian estate of theirs.<sup>55</sup> They would again remain hidden to us if no further evidence about their landed wealth in Körös were available to us. The estate amounted to more than 50 inhabited tenant plots and boasted a *castellum* from 1483 at the latest,<sup>56</sup> yet none of these families seems ever to have resided

50 MNL OL, DL 56 642, DL 56 210.

51 On one occasion, in June 1490 at Buda, Paul Paksi appears among the representatives of the Slavonian nobility (MNL OL, DF 252 107), but the case is entirely isolated.

52 The portion of Szircs which is listed in 1517 in the hands of George Sztrazsemljei was in 1507 held by Michael Paksi. It seems to have been taken over by George with half of Sukanc, we do not know by what right. Adamček–Kampuš, *Popisi*, 30, 98. Csáktornya: *ibid.*, 100.

53 Ban: Lajos Thallóczy and Sándor Horváth eds., *Jajcza (bánság és vár) története (1450–1527)* [The History of the Town and Castle of Jajce] (Budapest: Hornyánszky Viktor, 1915), 189; their lands, Csánki, *Történeti földrajz*, vol II, 427, 443.

54 MNL OL, DL 104 209: “egregiorum Emerici et Oswaldi de Rom [...] curiam nobilitarem [...] in possessione ipsorum Darozlawyabkwowa.” Descendants of a certain Doroszló, they had presumably acquired their lands in Körös in the thirteenth century; in 1354 referred to as *Dorozlouch* and *Obakua* (MNL OL, DF 254 164), the two villages later merged into Doroszlóbakva. On their possessions see Csánki, *Történeti földrajz*, vol. II, 847; on the careers of the individual members see Engel, *Archontológia*, vol. I, 207.

55 The estate was acquired by the Türje kindred, from which the Szentgróti originated, in the thirteenth century (Karácsonyi, *Magyar nemzetségek*, 1034). See also Csánki, *Körösmegye*, 66: Eccl. S. Crucis de Zlavina. 1514: “possessionum Sclawyna et Kerezthwr” (MNL OL, DL 60 024). This Keresztúr is today’s Križovljan (CRO). The Szentgróti also had a right, likewise since the thirteenth century, in the possessions of Orbona, Pósahegy (*Posahegh*), Ceraborda (*Czerawaborda*) and Gragena (*Gragenna*), which king Wladislaw granted away in 1491 for infidelity (MNL OL, DL 33 450). See Karácsonyi, *Magyar nemzetségek*, 1034.

56 MNL OL, DF 255 872: “castelli Zlawynya [...] Nicolai Haghmas de Berekwow ac Ladislai de Zenthgerolth;” 1503: “castellum [...] Sclawynya” (MNL OL, DL 68 040).

there, nor were they called of it, and anyway their possessions in Temes and Zala respectively were much more important, the Szentgróti even possessing the castle of the same name in the county of Zala.<sup>57</sup> After the death of John Szentgróti his portions somehow descended upon Francis Sárkány, from the same county of Zala, whereas by 1517 the whole estate had been reunited in the hands of Francis Kecser.<sup>58</sup>

In one respect, however, I did include at least some of these families into my investigation, namely in the chapter upon the origins of the families in the county of Körös, for their cases widen the circle of examples upon which the ways of land acquisition can be studied. Some other non-Slavonian families or persons, who became involved in the history of local families which are treated individually in the book, but do not deserve a chapter of their own, such as the Pető of Gerse or Peter Butkai, or George Diakói and the Ósi family, Vitus Horváth, Leonard Dacsó and John Pečiban (*Pechiban*), will be dealt with under the family with which their history became intertwined.

The families listed above had landed interests that spread over several counties, which, although raising methodological problems, at least makes their histories relatively easy to reconstruct. There are others, however, who were undoubtedly based, at least partly, in the county of Körös, and yet their origins and “belonging” are far from unproblematic. Interestingly, these cases concern that part of the county which had once belonged to Baranya. To start with, the Bakonyai family, apparently from the Hermán kindred,<sup>59</sup> owned the fairly important estates of Szuhamlaka and Szagyolca right up to their extinction in the 1480s. Bakonya itself lay in the county of Baranya, whereas the family’s main possessions, Sellye and Barcsiszentmihály, the latter with a *castellum*, in Baranya and Somogy respectively.<sup>60</sup> The offices taken by members of the family clearly show a non-Slavonian orientation,<sup>61</sup> and no member of the family ever appeared in a function that could be linked to the noble community of Körös. Yet the origins of the family’s Slavonian lands

57 Zala, Temes: Csánki, *Történelmi földrajz*, vol. II, 80, vol. III, 15; on the castle see Engel, *Archontológia*, vol. I, 425.

58 Adamček–Kampuš, *Popisi*, 27, 94.

59 Engel, *Archontológia*, vol. II, 18, identified by their coat of arms.

60 In fact, the lands which appear in the hands of the Bakonyai family in the counties of Somogy and Baranya in the later middle ages seem originally to have belonged to the Viszlói family, whose early history was closely connected to that of the Monoszló in Baranya. It is possible that the origins of Szuhamlaka and Szagyolca should be looked for in the same direction, especially in view of the fact that they lay between the two great blocks of land owned by the Monoszló in the region, namely Monoszló (Moslavina Podravska, CRO) and Darnóc, and that originally the Hermán kindred does not seem to have had lands in this region at all. The Bakonyai lands are listed in MNL OL, DL 18 391.

61 Engel, *Archontológia*, vol. II, 18. Stephen Bakonyai was viceban of Croatia in 1418, but it is conveniently explained by the fact that the brother of his lord, John Albeni, was bishop of Pécs then.

nevertheless present problems that need to be solved, even if not within the framework of the present book.

The Bakonyai lands, together with parts of Darnóc, were acquired in the 1460s and 1470s, apparently by right of pledge, by a nobleman from Croatia called Gregory Horváth of Gáj (*Gay*).<sup>62</sup> Gregory Horváth was a man of influence, castellan of Diósgyőr and then of Buda, until the mid-1470s, when he suddenly disappears from sight, probably because he fell out from the royal favour.<sup>63</sup> In 1478 he emerges among the representatives of the Slavonian nobility, and he seems to have constructed a *castellum* at *Branynch*, which is certainly to be identified as today's Vranesevci (CRO), then in the county of Körös.<sup>64</sup> But apart from that, we know nothing about his links with the nobility of Körös, and anyway the majority of his estates lay in Baranya. Some of his possessions went with the hand of his daughter to the Szerecsen of Mesztegnyő, who shared in the 1510s and 1520s the estates of Szuhamlaka and Szagolca with the kinsmen of Peter Váradi, the late archbishop of Kalocsa, and with members of the Nagylucsei family, who had received parts of the Bakonyai inheritance from king Matthias. Matthias Érsek was the brother of Peter Váradi, whereas Benedict Bári, who likewise possessed more than fifty tenant plots at Szagolca and Szuhamlaka, seems to have been the son of John Nagylucsei.<sup>65</sup> Gregory Bári, presumably the son of Benedict, was tax collector of Slavonia in 1517.<sup>66</sup> He seems to have resided in the county of Somogy, however, and both families disappeared from Körös soon thereafter, for around 1520 their portions were listed in the hands of Urban Fáncsi, to whom I will return below.

Pestenye, in the vicinity of Ráholca, seems originally to have been a district of considerable size. In the late middle ages the major part of it was owned by the Újlaki family, whereas the rest was in the hands of a populous family which bore its name.<sup>67</sup> I have been unable to trace back their origins to earlier than the end of the fourteenth century, but then as later they certainly possessed at Bodony in the county of Baranya, and probably at Monyorós as

62 MNL OL, DL 17 340, DF 265 797. Earlier, he had also taken into pledge the *castellum* of Palina (Paljevina, CRO), in the county of Valkó, from John Viszlói: MNL OL, DL 93 345. He may have been related to the Lawrence of Gáj (*Laurencio de Gay*) who in 1495 received money from the treasurer "ad conservacionem castris sui Gay vocati in confinibus et metis Turkorum Croacie siti." Johann Christian von Engel, *Geschichte des Ungarischen Reichs und seiner Nebenländer. 1. Theil* (Halle: n.p., 1797), 157.

63 Kubinyi, "Ernusz Zsigmond," 345–46.

64 MNL OL, DL 17 501: "Leonardo castellano Gregorii Horwath de Branyncz."

65 He is certainly not identical with the brother of chancellor Urban Nagylucsei, as supposed by András Kubinyi ("Ernusz Zsigmond," 347), for he died before 1482, and could thus not be listed in 1507. See Engel, *Középkori Magyar Genealógia*, Nagylucsei, and MNL OL, DL 20 718, DL 30 060.

66 Adamček–Kampuš, *Popisi*, 103. Although he is once rendered as George by the editors (*ibid.* 65), in the original his name certainly reads as *Gregorius*.

67 Adamček–Kampuš, *Popisi*, 8, 33.



well, both of which had originally belonged to the Győr kindred.<sup>68</sup> During the fifteenth century members of the family appear as neighbours and royal men<sup>69</sup> both in Körös and Baranya, and in 1507 George Pestenyei was deputy szolgabíró of Körös county.<sup>70</sup> Then, sometime during the first decade of the sixteenth century, a certain Thomas Sáfár of Pestenye somehow, presumably by way of marriage, acquired the lands of the important Monoki family in the counties of Zemplén, Abaúj and Sáros, where he was referred to as Horváth (Croatian), and thus became rich enough to be titled *egregius*. Evidently thanks to his rise, one of his kinsmen, Gregory, was also accorded the title occasionally, yet since the career of Thomas Sáfár, perhaps in the service of treasurer Benedict Batthyány,<sup>71</sup> took place outside Slavonia, and seems otherwise to have involved no consequence for the rest of his family, I have left them out of consideration.<sup>72</sup>

The situation is somewhat similar with Terbenye, near Szalatnok (Turbina, in the outskirts of Slatina, CRO). Nobles of Terbenye (*Tubina*) are already referred to at the end of the thirteenth century,<sup>73</sup> and they are to be identified as the Gerdei family from Baranya, whose ancestor had received it from king Béla IV.<sup>74</sup> Then, in the middle of the fifteenth century, we see a certain Valentine *parvus* of Terbenye, who is also called of the possession of Bár in the county of Baranya, and is referred to as *miles* and titled *egregius*. Since this Valentine *parvus* died before 1475, he cannot be the same as the other Valentine who in 1478 turns up equally as of Terbenye, and who was certainly a foreigner, also called of Podbucsa (Podbuča), presumably in the county of Pozsega. He may

68 Nagy Imre et al. eds., *Codex diplomaticus domus senioris comitum Zichy de Zich et Vásonkew. A zichi és vásonkői gróf Zichy-család idősb ágának okmánytára*, vol. IV of XII (Pest–Budapest: Magyar Történelmi Társulat, 1871–1931), 379–81; MNL OL, DF 94 320, DF 261 925.

69 Royal men (*homines regii*) designate persons who were delegated by the king or one of the judges of the court (palatine or judge royal) to carry out acts like formal introduction into a piece of land (similar to delivery of seisin in England), accompanied by the testimony of an ecclesiastical institution. Despite the name, these people had no connection with the king, of course; they were in all probability elected by the beneficiary of the act itself. The ban of Slavonia also had the right to order introductions and other similar acts, in which case I adopted the term banal men. On the delegation of royal men see later on pp 349–52.

70 MNL OL, DL 34 305, DL 14 491, DL 17 515 (this time in the county of Baranya). Adamček–Kampuš, *Popisi*, 33: *vicejudex nobilium*.

71 That it was in the service of Benedict Batthyány that Thomas Sáfár made a career is no more than pure hypothesis. It is based, on the one hand, on the very name of Thomas, for *sáfár* was a term evidently connected to the financial administration; and, on the other hand, on the fact that Benedict Batthyány, who owned the estate of Atyina, in the neighbourhood of Pestenye, was treasurer at the very time when Thomas Sáfár rose socially.

72 MNL OL, DL 75 983, DL 94 320, DL 75 997 (for Thomas and Gregory Pestenyei), DF 261 924 (Gregory).

73 MNL OL, DF 252 338: “in vicinio terre nobilium de Tubina.”

74 György Györffy, *Az Árpád-kori Magyarország történeti földrajza* [The Historical Geography of Hungary in the Árpád Age], vol. I of IV (Budapest: Akadémiai, 1966–1998), 305–06. Gyula Kristó et al., eds., *Anjou-kori Oklevéltár* [Charters of the Angevin Period], vol. II of XXXII (Szeged–Budapest: n.p., 1990–2013), 456.

have been settled in Körös by the Újlaki family.<sup>75</sup> Whether he was related to the Andrew Horváth who is listed as owning Terbenye in 1495, or to the person called Caspar who held it in 1507, is unknown. It is beyond doubt, however, that by 1513 Terbenye had devolved upon Benedict Batthyány together with Atyina and other neighbouring lands.<sup>76</sup> What is certainly worth remarking in this respect is the strong social and territorial links which apparently continued to attach this region of the county of Körös to that of Baranya even after they had been administratively separated.

Further down the social ladder we find families whose members were regularly titled as simple *nobiles*, and the *egregius* title was accorded but once or twice to one single person. This is the case with the Csezmicsei, Zsupán (Župan) of Prezečnaſó (*Prezechnafew*), Ördög of Vragovc (*Wragowcz*), Pasinci (*Paschyncz*), Fintics (Fintiċ) of Poljana (*Fynthycz de Polyana*), Lacovich (Lacoviċ) of Butinc (*Laczowycz de Bwtthyncz*) families, among others. In these cases we normally do not know why the title was given to the person in question, but, as I have stated above, it was never wholly accidental, so our ignorance should be attributed to the lack of sources. Four examples will suffice to prove the point. Peter Fintics of Poljana was szolgabíró of Körös for several years in the early sixteenth century.<sup>77</sup> His family seems originally to have belonged to the castle nobility of Körös itself, and his landed wealth was quite modest.<sup>78</sup> Accordingly, he is as a rule titled simply noble, with one exception in 1501, when he is accorded the *egregius* title by the banal notary. The case is especially interesting since four other noblemen of approximately the same status appear in the charter as mere *nobiles*. The key to understanding the case seems to reside in Peter's relationship to George Kerecsényi, the other person figuring in the charter with the *egregius* title. George himself belongs to the group whose members were accorded the title with no exception, and his son, Paul, had already been betrothed with Dorothy Mikcsec. As for Peter, he had married another woman from the same family, namely the daughter of Nicholas Mikcsec, and it must have been this newly established family link with the Kerecsényi, and also with the Mikcsec of Cirkvena, which made him

75 MNL OL, DL 34 305 (1450): "Valentino milite parvo dicto de Turbine;" DL 14 491 (1451): "egregio Valentino de Thurbine;" DL 17 656 (1474): "Johannis filii quondam Valentini parvi de Baar;" DL 103 818 (1478): "egregius Valentinus de Podbwcha alias de Therwbenye (!) missis et destinatis universis populis et jobagionibus magnifici domini Laurencii ducis de Wylak in dicta possessione Thewrbenye vocata commorantibus [...] egregius Valentinus Thwrbenye de Podbucha homo et (nacione) alienigena."

76 Adamček-Kampuš, *Popisi*, 8, 33, 64.

77 1510 (MNL OL, DL 37 878)–1515 (DL 22 659); 1520 (DL 102 232)–1523 (DL 35 785). I only indicate the earliest and latest known dates of his officeholding.

78 4 inhabited tenant plots in 1495, 19 in 1513: Adamček-Kampuš, *Popisi*, 15, 56–57. It is, admittedly, quite a marked increase, yet in itself not enough to serve as the foundation for a durable rise.



seem to the scribe of the charter as well as to those present as deserving the title.<sup>79</sup>

Peter Lacovich (*Laczowych*) was also szolgabíró of Körös, partly at least together with Peter Fintics, and his landed property of the same size.<sup>80</sup> It is thus very remarkable to see him in 1516 before the convent of Somogy being titled *egregius* together with Balthasar Batthyány and his two sons, among whom Francis was already master of the cupbearers, and they were certainly incomparably richer than Peter.<sup>81</sup> Yet the case was not wholly accidental, for only two years later Peter was again given the title, this time by the royal chancellery, when he received a donation together with another Batthyány, namely Benedict, castellan of Buda, and accordingly titled *magnificus*.<sup>82</sup> In his case, it appears to have been his otherwise unknown, but certainly close relationship to the Batthyány family which earned him the distinction; in other words, “superior connections seem to have been the determinant of superior status.”<sup>83</sup>

It is in 1497 that Ladislás Paska of Pasinc appears with the *egregius* title, together with Stephen Gorbonoki.<sup>84</sup> The tiny possession whose name Ladislás bore lay in the vicinity of Gorbonok,<sup>85</sup> and he is not known to have acquired more land anywhere else. The key to the case is provided by a charter of roughly the same time, in which the same Ladislás, titled simply *nobilis*, turns up as the *officialis* of Stephen Gorbonoki, himself *egregius* again, at his estate of Racciaszentistván (Bedenička, CRO).<sup>86</sup> It was thus either his office, or his close relationship to his lord, or, most probably the combination of the two, which made him appear to the szolgabírák of Körös, or their scribe, as deserving the *egregius* title.

And finally, George Zsupanics (*Swpanich*, Županić) of Prezečnaľő (*Prezechnafew*), the son of Benedict called “zsupán” (župan), probably because he was *comes terrestris* of Kemlék,<sup>87</sup> was titled *egregius* at least twice, in 1493 and 1513.<sup>88</sup> The Prezečnaľői family also belonged to the castle nobility of Kemlék,<sup>89</sup> and their landed wealth seems to have remained restricted to the village whose name they bore. The father of George, Benedict, was listed

79 MNL OL, DF 282 471.

80 Szolgabíró 1513 (MNL OL, DL 22 440)–1515 (DL 22 659); see Adamček–Kampuš, *Popisi*, 62, on his lands.

81 MNL OL, DL 101 493.

82 Dezső Szabó, *A magyar országgyűlések története II. Lajos korában* [The History of the Hungarian Diets in the Time of Louis II] (Budapest: Magyar Tudományos Akadémia, 1909), 130–31.

83 Carpenter, *Locality and Polity*, 74.

84 MNL OL, DL 104 065.

85 Adamček–Kampuš, *Popisi*, 9.

86 MNL OL, DL 104 077.

87 MNL OL, DF 218 805. See DF 233 293: “comitem terrestrem vulgo swpan dictum” (with regard precisely to NagyKemlék).

88 MNL OL, DF 233 293, DL 101 460.

89 MNL OL, DL 102 112.

twice among the representatives of the Slavonian nobility in the 1470s, and also functioned as *szolgabíró* of Körös,<sup>90</sup> which, perhaps with his office of *comes terrestris*, surely provided him with some local prestige which was inherited by his son. Later on, however, George Zsupanics was one of the castellans appointed by Balthasar Batthyány to the important castle of Szentgyörgy, when he governed the Ernuszt lands,<sup>91</sup> and in 1512, together precisely with Peter Lacovich, he apparently acted as tax collector in Slavonia.<sup>92</sup> It was surely these offices, reflecting the support of Balthasar Batthyány, which justified the *egregius* title given to him by the chapter of Zagreb a few years later. Since, however, apart from the exceptional attribution of the *egregius* title, nothing else (landed wealth, office-holding, marriage alliances resulting in social rise, etc) permits to treat the family of either Peter, nor those of Ladislás and George, as standing out of the ranks of the petty nobility, I decided to exclude them and their like from the present investigation.

In other cases, on the other hand, alongside the likewise exceptional attribution of the *egregius* title we have other considerations which exclude an automatic rejection of the families/persons concerned from the ranks of the élite. Valentine Pálfi of Szentmihály (*Obramowczzenthmyhal*), for example, one of the “star-lawyers” at the turn of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, was for several years castellan of Zdenc in the service of the Bátori family, a post which involved the title as a rule. As the wide circle of his clients show, however, he was a person of not only local authority.<sup>93</sup> Nicholas Orros of Orrosovc (*Orrosowcz*), another “professional” lawyer in the last decades of the fifteenth century, was also titled *egregius* as long as he was an *officialis* of the Bánfi family on the important estate of Orbona. Moreover, he was several times tax collector of Slavonia, a post normally reserved for persons of much greater wealth, and he also acted as the representative of the Slavonian nobility.<sup>94</sup> It is in this respect highly conspicuous that other persons administering the estate of Orbona were titled simply *nobiles*.<sup>95</sup>

Another category of seemingly “dubious” cases is represented by John Stefekfi of Temenica (*Themennycha*). His ancestors apparently had lived in complete obscurity, but he possessed some half a dozen villages in the late fifteenth century and again had a *castellum* of his own, and was accordingly

90 1478 (MNL OL, DL 18 011)–1479 (DL 70 046).

91 MNL OL, DL 104 203.

92 MNL OL, DL 47 028, a quittance issued by George Kasztellánfi, where they are not referred to as tax collectors, but the case is difficult to explain otherwise.

93 For the references see the chapter on the Pálfi family below.

94 For the references see the chapter on the Orros family below.

95 MNL OL, DF 277 175/371 ecw: “Nobilis Johannes Simonffy de Mylethyncz familiaris necnon officialis in Orbona magnifici domini Jacobi Banffy de Alsolyndwa.” Since the documents cited are now available on the internet, in case of the *protocolla* of the chapters of Csázma and Buda (MNL OL, DF 277 174, DL 106 083) I give the number of the photo where the document referred to can be found, which is much easier to search back than the pagination of the original document.

frequently given the *egregius* title. Indeed, his fortification merited to be mentioned by name in one of the decrees of king Matthias. Yet a careful scrutiny of the sources has revealed that this obscurity was in reality no more than apparent, and the emergence of John Stefekfi in the *egregius* group can by no means be regarded as accidental.<sup>96</sup> The situation is somewhat similar in the case of the Budor of Budrovc, as we will see below. Nevertheless, it should be kept in mind that these persons and their families cannot be treated as making part of the noble “élite” of the county without further qualifications, a problem to which I will have to return in the second part of the present book.

A separate group is constituted by the *familiares* of the counts of Cilli, foreign and Hungarian alike, some of whom acquired considerable estates in the county of Körös during their dominance there between 1423 and 1456. Five of them figure in the list of the *egregius* group. Wolfgang Frodnacher, Georg Piers and Christoph Paschingar will be treated below, separately or in connection with the history of local families, and so will be the Hungarian Rohonci family. Among the Hungarian (that is, non-Slavonian) families who owed their establishment and rise in the county of Körös to the counts of Cilli, we find Ladislás Zalai, who, at least according to his name, came from the county of Zala.<sup>97</sup> He received from count Ulrich the estate of Dobovc in the county of Körös in 1446. He possessed the estate, where a *castellum* was erected, until his heirless death sometime before January 1464.<sup>98</sup> He possessed considerable land in Körös, but we simply know too little about him to treat him in a separate chapter. I will nevertheless use his example, together with those of others, before all in the chapter on geographical mobility and its means.

The remaining families and persons roughly fall within two groups of unequal size. The first contains those among them who were always or regularly titled *egregius*, regardless of any office held or the varying amount of the property owned. The second comprises those who were sometimes accorded the *egregius* title, but were at least as frequently titled *nobilis*, or, speaking about families, some members were given the *egregius* title, whereas others were denied it. In their case the use of the title seems to have been more dependent on individual considerations, and sometimes reflects personal careers which only become visible upon further investigation. These two groups constitute the starting point of the analysis, especially if a further investigation along the other three criteria will have revealed that they indeed constituted a distinguishable stratum within the nobility.

At first it is necessary to try to determine the landed wealth of the families and persons which figure on the list based on titles, and see whether any concordance can be established between the two lists thus obtained. This task

<sup>96</sup> See below the chapter on the Stefekfi family.

<sup>97</sup> According to one piece of information, in 1461 he was holding some possessions in pledge from the Ostfi family in the county of Zala.

<sup>98</sup> MNL OL, DF 233 189, DF 233 198, DF 233 309.

is not as simple as it would seem at first glance, for in Slavonia we have no early tax registers, and by the time the first comprehensive list was prepared in 1495, several of the families had disappeared, whereas others arrived only later. However, in knowledge of the size of the individual estates (that is, the number of inhabited tenant plots they comprised) even their wealth can be reconstructed with some probability. Fortunately, between 1495 and 1526 we have several more or less complete lists from the county of Körös, from which even those figures can be completed which for some reasons are missing from that of 1495.<sup>99</sup>

At first I enumerate those families which can be found in the register of 1495,<sup>100</sup> the numbers representing the tenant plots in the possession of the individual families (within brackets I give the corresponding figures from the registers of 1507 where available):

In the district of Andrew Toka of Kopacsovc:

Fáncs of Gordova	114 [137]	Gordova
Marcinko of Predriho	73 [69]	Predriho
Gereci	90 [105]	Gerec
Kerhen of Belosovc	69	Belosovc, Kerhevina, Lestakovc, Novaszentmárton, Csezmice
Sandrinfi of Musina	53 [32]	Musina
Gorbonoki	183	Drávamelléki, Gorbonok, Racsicaszentistván, (Szencse) szentmihály, Belosovc
Megyericsei	69 [84]	Megyericse
Orros of Orrosovc	13	Orrosovc, Csakovc

In the district of George Vitézfi of Kamarja:

Rohfi of Décse	198	Kutenya, Kaptolovc, Blagay, Glogowy, Sosen, Dianföld, Décse, Gyuganc (Gywgancz)
Ervencei	26	Ervence <sup>1</sup>
Kasztellánfi/Lónyai	237	Hom, Szentlélek, Szircs, Dimicskfölde, Podgorja, Popud, Újhely, Bikszád (the last two only George)

<sup>99</sup> Adamček–Kampos, *Popisi*, 23–36, 49–67, 89–105, 120–30.

<sup>100</sup> *Ibid.*, 7–15.

Pekri	220	Petrovina
Szencsei	326	Szencse, Peklence
Borotva of Tersztenice	95	Tersztenice (Therzthenycze), Szentdienes
Pan of Kravarina	57	Kravarina, Temenice
Mindszenti	21	Mindszent, Mellesovc
Berivojszentiváni	45,5	Berivojszentiván
Kapitánfi of Desnice	76	Desnice
Tulbert of Berstyanóc	59	Berstyanóc
Pálfi	11	Obramovcszentmihály
Garázda	34	Garazdinc

In the district of Demetrius Miletinci:

Pogány	69	Herbortya
Frodnacher of Bednya	126	Bednya
Bocskai of Raszinya	67	Raszinya
Kamarcai	10	Kamarca
Tompa of Horzova	15	Beketinc, Horzova, Temerje
Hássági	26 (plus 25 in the district below, in total 51)	Karlovc, Szobotica, [Kupinno]

In the district of George Prasovci:

Pataki	7	Patak
Cirkvenai	41	Cirkvena
Raveni	39	Raven

- 1 The Georgius de Erwencze who is listed on p. 10 as possessing part of Szencse and Kozacsina is almost certainly a misspelling of Georgius de Zemche; no person bearing the name George is known from the Ervencei family from this period.

It becomes apparent at the first sight that roughly half of the families in the reduced "*egregius*" group are missing from the list drawn on the basis of the 1495 register. The reasons are basically threefold. Some of them are absent because their possessions were exempted upon royal orders: before all, Balthasar Batthyány, then ban of Jajce, with 588 plots; then Peter Gudovci, the deputy prothonotary of Slavonia, with 200 plots; Bernard Turóci, viceban,

with 198 plots; and, last but not least, Peter Bocskai of Raszinya with 200 plots.<sup>101</sup> David Dombai is surely missing because at the time when the register was prepared he was revolting against the king and his lands consequently confiscated. In his case not even the later registers are helpful, for in 1507 we find a mere 6 tenant plots in the hands of his kinsman, Joseph (Josa) Dombai.<sup>102</sup> Yet we know that he owned half of the ancient Gorbonoki lands in Körös, so the number of his plots should be put well in excess of 100. The lands of the Dersfi family, on the other hand, were not registered in 1495 for reasons unknown to us. In 1507 Nicholas Dersfi is registered as having 101 plots in Körös.<sup>103</sup> The Nelepeci are also missing from the register of 1495, whereas in 1507 Francis Nelepeci is listed with 16 plots at Dobrakucsa.<sup>104</sup> By that time, however, the family had lost the major part of the estate, which in 1495 was registered in the hands of James Székely with some 150 tenant plots.

The absence of other families from the list is accounted for by the fact that they had disappeared by the time it was drafted. The lands of Ladislas Hermanfi of Greben were inherited by his adopted son, Balthasar Batthyány. Georg Piers and Christoph Paschingar, two foreign *familiars* of the counts of Cilli, had possessed the estates of Szobocsina (40 tenant plots in 1507)<sup>105</sup> and Garignica (35 in 1517)<sup>106</sup> respectively in the middle of the fifteenth century. Nicholas Pozsegai, who inherited the estate of Garignica, died without heirs in the early 1480s. Nicholas Gereci<sup>107</sup> and a Muslim refugee called Joseph (Josa) the Turk in Hungary, had received from king Sigismund the estate of Kristallóc (88 plots in 1507) in 1428 but lost it in 1456. The Bikszádi family, which had possessed the estate of Bikszád (48 plots in 1495), died out in the 1480s and their lands were inherited by George Kasztellánfi. The lands of John Ost of Herbortya, on the other hand, had been inherited by the Pogány. Those of Stephen Csupor, the last member of his kin, devolved upon the Erdődi family (572 plots in 1494).<sup>108</sup> The Kustyer (Kustyerolc with 36 plots in 1507), Stefekfi (Temenice with 25 in 1495) and Latkfi (Mogor/Latkovina with 48 in 1507) families also disappeared before 1495.

101 Adamček-Kampuš, *Popisi*, 6–7. Since the rate of the tax was half a florin per tenant plots, the sums must to be doubled to get the sum of tenant plots. It is certain that the Petrus Bwthkay, from whose lands a tax of 100 florins is remitted, is identical with Peter Bocskai, for he is absent from the corresponding tax register. On the other hand, the Petrus Bochkay who is listed among the owners of Gordova (*ibid.*, 7) is in fact Peter Butkai, who, as we will see below, acquired part of the Fáncs lands by marriage.

102 Adamček-Kampuš, *Popisi*, 28.

103 *Ibid.*, 27–28.

104 *Ibid.*, 30.

105 *Ibid.*, 28, then in the possession of the chapter of Csázma.

106 *Ibid.*, 100.

107 There were two villages called Gerec in the medieval county of Körös. The Gereci family from which this Nicholas originated had come to Slavonia sometime during the Angevin era from the distant county of Szatmár. See below the chapter on the Gereci family.

108 Adamček-Kampuš, *Popisi*, 4, as “bona domini Agriensis.”

Others, on the other hand, are missing from the register of 1495 because they acquired their lands in the county of Körös thereafter. Elias Bosnyák (altogether 75 plots in 1507), Paul Čavlović (Ervence and Vojkovc with 52 plots in 1507), the Kerecsényi family (Kopozovc, Markovc, Klenovc with 23 plots in 1507, and the Čirkvenai inheritance), the Kecser family (Poljana and part of Raszinya with 72 plots in 1507), Balthasar Alapi (the estate of Nagykemlék) and John Tahi (the entire Gorbonoki inheritance) all belong to this group. Others, such as Balthasar Hobetić, also rose to the *egregius* group after 1495, together with Stephen Prasovci (Prašćevec, CRO) (43 plots in 1517), one of the few to have avoided our net of criteria, basically because his appearances as *egregius* all fall within the years immediately preceding Mohács, the charters of which have been, as stated above, deliberately left out of consideration. Another such case, from the earlier part of the period, is that of the Rohonci family, of the Héder kindred, which had possessed the estate of Ludbreg from 1421 until the early 1450s. They became extinct then, and their lands were acquired by Benedict Turóci. A unique case is that of the Kopinci, all the lands of whom (altogether 43 plots in 1495) were listed in the hands of a certain George Móre.<sup>109</sup>

With some exceptions, all the families listed above, that is, those who were selected upon the basis of the *egregius* title, can be found among the greatest non-baronial landowners in the county of Körös. Most of them had more than 50 inhabited tenant plots, and even most of those among them who seemingly possessed less can, by further investigation, be shown to have had much more than is apparent upon the basis of the royal tax registers. Thus, among those who fall very short of the 50 plots limit, the Ervencei, for instance, had already lost the estate of Szobocsina by 1495, whereas the Kamarcai, as we will see later, turn up under various names in the tax registers, and their landed wealth cannot consequently be summed up without reconstructing their history before. The same is true of families such as the Pataki, Garázda or Tompa of Horzova, as indeed of the Orros and Pálfi, whose (albeit only temporary) emergence in the *egregius* group will only become comprehensible upon a closer inspection of their history. Even more important, no other family, with one exception, turns up in the tax registers as having more than 40 tenant plots. It is the enigmatic Bakolcai (Donja/Nova Bukovica, CRO) family, which is listed with the outstanding figure of 192 tenant plots,<sup>110</sup> yet I was unable to find any one of them in the *egregius* group. This means, quite naturally, that a close correlation can be established between the attribution of the *egregius* title and a certain amount of landed wealth. According to the tax registers the line which separates the *egregius* group from the rest of noble society below runs somewhere between 20 and 50 inhabited tenants plots, although it should be remarked that this line is far from clearcut.

109 Ibid., 7, 11, 13.

110 Ibid., 8.



Unfortunately, moreover, the royal tax registers are for a number of reasons unable to reflect other than a very faint picture of noble wealth. One of the major problems with such lists is that they only enumerate plots inhabited at the time of their preparation, which is quite normal in the case of royal tax lists. Moreover, even these numbers must have been subject to considerable manipulations on the part of the lords. The figures we find therefore indicate only the minimum amount of tenant plots owned by the individual families. Three examples will suffice to prove this. A seigneurial register of the estate of Gordova drafted in 1504 enumerates 148 inhabited plots, which is quite close to the figure we find in the tax list of 1507 (137). Yet at the same time 92 deserted plots are equally listed,<sup>111</sup> the importance of which lays in the fact that deserted plots were not necessarily uncultivated and were consequently a source of income for the lord.<sup>112</sup> The estate of Kristallóc figures in 1507 with 87 plots, whereas in 1517 we find 70 there.<sup>113</sup> Fortunately we have a separate register of the estate prepared by Ladislás Hermanfi of Greben in 1472, which enumerates 85 inhabited plots, again quite close to the figures found in the tax lists. The number of deserted plots is 33, to which are added 19 possessed by “landless” tenants (*inquilini*).<sup>114</sup> Even more convincing is the case of the Dersfi lands. We have seen that in 1507 101 tenant plots were registered there, whereas in 1425 as many as 407 individual taxpayers were listed in a seigneurial register.<sup>115</sup> Of course, the number of taxpayers is not identical with that of tenant plots, and the number of the latter may have diminished during the course of more than eighty years, yet the discrepancy is nonetheless astonishing. In other cases we cannot exactly account for the differences between the figures found in the tax lists and what seems to have been the real situation. The example of Desnice is revealing in this respect. In 1495 76 plots are listed on the estate, but this sum does not contain the portion of Balthasar Batthyány.<sup>116</sup> Yet in 1488, when Ladislás Hermanfi made an accord with Matthias Kapitánfi, the portion of the latter alone contained 91,5 plots, 73 of which were inhabited.<sup>117</sup> The case of Garignica is even more difficult to account for. The estate is first registered in 1517 with

111 C. Tóth, “Gordovai család,” 282; Adamček–Kampuš, *Popisi*, 32.

112 Tibor Neumann, “Telekpusztásodás a késő középkori Magyarországon” [Deserted Tenant Plots in Late Medieval Hungary], *Századok* 137 (2003): 849–84.

113 Adamček–Kampuš, *Popisi*, 31, 99.

114 MNL OL, DL 103 731: “registrum super porcionem possessionalem egregii Ladislai Hermani de Greben in Krystallowcz [...] factam.”

115 Árpád Nógrády, “A földesúri adó és az adózás elve a késő középkori Magyarországon” [Seigneurial Tax and the Concept of Taxation in Late Medieval Hungary], in *Gazdaság és gazdálkodás a középkori Magyarországon: gazdaságtörténet, anyagi kultúra, régészet* [Economy and Production in Medieval Hungary: Economic History, Material Culture, Archaeology], ed. András Kubinyi, József Laszlovsky, and Péter Szabó (Budapest: Martin Opitz, 2008), 366–68.

116 Adamček–Kampuš, *Popisi*, 11.

117 MNL OL, DF 219 032.

a mere 36 plots, a figure which seems absurdly low.<sup>118</sup> For a basis of comparison we have a register from the middle of the fifteenth century, when the plots then held by Ladislas Pekri were enumerated. Sixteen among the appurtenances of the *castellum* can be identified with those named in 1491, when it came into the possession of Balthasar Batthyány, and in these sixteen villages alone 123 plots are counted.<sup>119</sup> In 1418 the possessions of Majos Gereci were estimated: alongside 144 inhabited tenant plots (a figure considerably in excess of the number registered in 1495), 54 uninhabited plots were also found, all of them having buildings.<sup>120</sup>

A further weakness of these lists is that they merely enumerate tenant plots. Neither fortifications nor market towns are registered separately, they have consequently to be identified on the basis of the charter material, which, thanks to the peculiar circumstances of its survival, is in itself a source of uncertainty. The same is true of other sources of income, such as fairs and markets, tolls and ferries, but also woodland and pastures. To give but one example, in 1418 not only dozens of mills were registered on the Gereci lands, but also three ferries on the Drava river, extensive woodland along the same river, all of them valuable sources of revenue; only the fishponds belonging to one of the villages were said to yield 400 florins a year. Moreover, several among the families and persons listed above owned property outside the county of Körös, some of them even more than there, a fact which obviously influenced their social position in Slavonia. Furthermore, the division of land within the individual families, one of the possible causes of differences in the social and political behaviour of their members, cannot be reconstructed backwards, with the exception of a few families for which the extant charter material complements conveniently the information offered by the list of 1495. The latter is thus no more than a starting point for the further analysis and as such turns out to be more useable than it may seem at first sight.<sup>121</sup>

In any case, the concordance between title and landed wealth seems evident even before any thoroughgoing analysis is done. In the next step I involved another indicator of social prominence in my investigation, by comparing the list with another one which contains all the vicebans and ispáns of Körös who had possessions in the county of Körös between 1400 and 1526.<sup>122</sup> The concordance is again remarkable: out of a total of 44 persons/

118 Adamček-Kampuš, *Popisi*, 100.

119 MNL OL, DL 103 610, DL 101 123.

120 *Zsigmondkori Oklevéltár*, vol. VI, no. 1465.

121 For similar difficulties hindering the use of tax return lists for identical purposes in England see Simon Payling, *Political Society in Lancastrian England. The Greater Gentry of Nottinghamshire* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991), 4–7.

122 The list, arranged in chronological order (but without regard to the repeated office-holding of the individual vicebans), is based partly on Engel, *Archontológia*, vol. I, 19–20, and partly on my own research. The whole archontology of the bans of Slavonia and their deputies is published in the appendix of the book. Adam *Kasztellánfi*, Nicholas *Borotva* of Tersztenice,

families only 5 cannot be found on the list based on title. Among them Mathusel Mecseneci (*de Mecchencze*), viceban of Paul Csupor, although at first sight apparently a subaltern figure who can safely be left out of consideration, will be treated later on in the context of the Vojk kindred. Sigismund Hanchihar was a *familiaris* of the counts of Cilli, who obtained the estate of Bednya but disappeared soon without offspring.<sup>123</sup> The Ciráki family, from the county of Sopron, who held the estate of Szobocsina in the middle of the fifteenth century, likewise disappeared from Slavonia soon thereafter.<sup>124</sup> As for Domozlaus Ataki (*de Athak*), otherwise called Bohemian, he seems to have been a foreign retainer of John Vitovec, who served as viceban for some months in 1458, but consequently disappeared without trace.<sup>125</sup> The Jakószerdahelyi family, on the other hand, was certainly related to the Kamarcai, as I will try to prove it below, and should thus not be regarded as an exception.

The list of names I have thus prepared is, of course, no more than a heterogeneous conglomerate which is not very revealing in itself. My only aim was to define the target of the analysis, and, from this point of view, the list can indeed be used as a starting point. It is reasonably hoped that I have captured all those people who, in the period between 1400 and 1526, belonged to the highest non-baronial stratum of the nobility in the county of Körös. In order to proceed further, however, it was necessary to research every single entity separately, and collect as many data as possible from the charters. I have thus prepared biographies of each of the families and persons, which enumerate the most important political, military and social facts of each of the family members for whom information is available. The length of these narratives depends of course partly on the number of sources, partly on the biological lifetime of the family concerned. Thus, whereas in some cases the story developed into a real "family history", in other cases we have but bits and pieces which cannot even be connected to each other. The overall picture is consequently bound to remain somewhat obscure and full of blank spaces, but this is an obstacle that no historian researching the pre-Mohács nobility can avoid. In each case I started with the origins of the family, if these could be

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Mathusel Mecseneci, Andrew *Rohonci*, Sigismund Hanchihar of Bednya, Stephen Vitéz of *Kamarca*, Ladislás *Szencsei* senior, Peter Ade *Kasztellánfi*, Herman *Grebeni*, Akacius *Csupor*, Thomas Ciráki, George *Bikszádi*, Caspar *Kasztellánfi*, Benedict *Turóci*, John Vitovec, Nicholas *Dombai*, Nicholas Ade *Kasztellánfi*, Domozlaus Ataki, Blaise Briga of Jakószerdahely (Sredice, CRO), Ladislás *Szencsei* junior, Peter *Szerecsen* of Mesztegnyő, Ladislás *Roh*, Akacius Ade *Kasztellánfi*, Ladislás *Hermanfi* of *Greben*, John *Mindszenti*, John *Geszi*, Nicholas *Pozsegai*, Peter *Bocskai*, Andrew *Kapitánfi*, Michael *Kerhen*, Bernard *Roh*, Louis *Pekri*, Bernard *Turóci*, Marcinko of *Predriho*, Balthasar *Alapi*, John *Gyulai*, George *Kasztellánfi*, Vitus Garázda of *Kamarca*, Elias *Bosnyák* of Businc, Francis *Nelepeci*, Balthasar *Batthyány*, Nicholas *Dersfi* of Szerdahely, Paul *Kerecsényi*.

123 On his career see Engel, *Archontológia*, vol. II, 94.

124 Thomas Ciráki was apparently taken by Matko Tallóci to Slavonia, and received the estate of Szobocsina in order to be able to assume the office of viceban there. MNL OL, DL 100 723.

125 MNL OL, DF 255 809, DF 275 929, DF 275 930.

retraced at all, and limited myself to merely indicating the main lines of its history after 1526 if it had any. Having done all this, I will have enough socio-historical material to carry out a deeper analysis and see whether it is at all reasonable to speak about a noble élite and if yes, in what sense.

It should be remarked that these “biographies” do not merely constitute a kind of appendix to the book: indeed, they form the very basis of it, upon which all the analyses and conclusions put forward in the second part are founded. The essence of this approach has been perfectly summarised by a great French historian: “A life makes sense only when compared with other lives. One way to situate the individual life is to reconstitute the lives of other members of the same social or occupational group. Collective biography of this kind goes by the name *prosopography* [...]. Prosopography aims to be exhaustive. It does not focus exclusively on the illustrious but also looks at the obscure. When all possible data have been gathered a social history can be reconstructed [...] and individual lives can then be examined against this background.”<sup>126</sup> I have tried to solve many problems concerning the origins and descent of the individual families in these narratives, and frequently to refute traditional views. These narratives, therefore, are also intended to serve as a starting point for all future research on the nobility of the county of Körös and of Slavonia in general; yet, though I have always aimed at gathering all the extant pieces of information, no doubt many of my biographies will be completed by other researchers in the future. The narratives follow each other in a simple alphabetical order (with the exception of the supposed descendants of Belus, and those of Isaac, whom I grouped under the same heading), and by no means reflect an order of importance.



126 Bernard Guenée, *Between Church and State: the Lives of Four French Prelates in the late Middle Ages* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), 7–8. (Originally published as *Entre l'Eglise et l'Etat. Quatre vies de prélats français à la fin du Moyen Âge (XIII–XVe siècles)* [Paris: Gallimard, 1987]).

## 2.2. THE NOBLE FAMILIES – SHORT BIOGRAPHIES

## 2.2.1. Balthasar Alapi (Alapić, de Alap)

The founder of the post-Mohács Alapy (Alapić) of Nagykemlék family is still sometimes linked to the Kishorvát of Hlapčić, with whom, however, he had nothing to do.<sup>127</sup> For it is beyond doubt that the family from which Balthasar came had for centuries been living in the village called Alap in the county of Fejér, which, moreover, seems to have been the only possession of the populous family.<sup>128</sup> In all probability, the family descended from a Petcheneg (Hung. *besenyő*) called Chydur.<sup>129</sup> Yet nothing memorable is known to have happened to the family until 1432/33, when, somewhat unexpectedly, Stephen Alapi is recorded as a member of king Sigismund's entourage escorting the ruler to the imperial coronation in Rome.<sup>130</sup> In October 1432 at Siena he and his kinsmen were rewarded by the king for his services done in Germany and Italy with the portions of Ladislás Majos at Alap.<sup>131</sup> Among his relatives enumerated in the charter we do not find Ladislás, however, who was the father of Andrew Alapi,<sup>132</sup> who, in his turn, laid with his marriage the foundations for the family's future expansion in Slavonia.

Sometime before 1460 Andrew married Margaret, daughter of Ladislás Batthyány,<sup>133</sup> took the name of his wife,<sup>134</sup> and thus founded the Batthyány of Alap family. Margaret had previously been married first to Stephen Grebeni and then to Peter Fáncs, and the portions of the latter in the family estates in the counties of Somogy and Körös were redeemed by Andrew Alapi.<sup>135</sup> The fact that in January 1463 the retainers of Andrew together with those of Frank Fáncs robbed and burnt down the *castellum* of George Fáncs at Gordova must already have been connected to his emergence as co-possessor of the Fáncs lands.<sup>136</sup> A year later Andrew promised to hand over to Caspar, son of Peter,

127 See for example the relevant article in *Magyar Nagylexikon* [Great Hungarian Lexicon], vol. I, A–Anc (Budapest: Akadémiai, 1993), 408.

128 MNL OL, DL 66 430, DL 66 432, DL 66 434, where several members of the family are listed.

129 MNL OL, DL 66 425.

130 Enikő Csukovits, "Egy nagy utazás résztvevői (Zsigmond király római kísérete)" [The Participants of a Great Journey. The Entourage of King Sigismund at Rome], in *Tanulmányok Borsai Iván tiszteletére* [Studies in Honour of Iván Borsa], ed. Enikő Csukovits (Budapest: Magyar Országos Levéltár, 1998), 33.

131 MNL OL, DL 66 430. He was a *familiaris* of Ladislás Majos of Dáró, himself a court *familiaris*.

132 MNL OL, DL 66 432.

133 Engel, *Középkori magyar genealógia*, Batthyány.

134 MNL OL, DL 106 555: "egregii Andree Alapy de Bathyan."

135 MNL OL, DL 15 940.

136 MNL OL, DF 255 767.

his portion of the Fáncs possessions, in return for which Caspar engaged himself to resign in favour of his stepfather his maternal share in the Batthyány lands.<sup>137</sup> In 1470, however, he pledged again for 1000 florins to Andrew all his portions in the counties of Somogy and Körös.<sup>138</sup>

From the marriage of Andrew with Margaret Batthyány two sons were born: Stephen and Benedict. Stephen seems to have died young, whereas Benedict, who was constantly called Batthyány, and received a common coat of arms with Balthasar Batthyány,<sup>139</sup> became royal treasurer in the 1500s and acquired the estate of Atyina in the county of Körös.<sup>140</sup> Balthasar Alapi, on the other hand, was never called Batthyány, yet Benedict was once referred to as his cousin (*frater patruelis*),<sup>141</sup> and he himself called him his brother (*frater carnalis*).<sup>142</sup> It is thus probable that Balthasar was born from the marriage of Andrew Alapi with another woman, either before or after his marriage with Margaret Batthyány. This would also explain why he upheld no claims to the Batthyány lands.

We do not know how and when Balthasar entered the service of duke John Corvin, which eventually led to his establishment in Slavonia. He is first mentioned as the duke's castellan of Medve (Medvedgrad, CRO) in 1492, but the charter refers to earlier services as well, and later the duke emphasised that Balthasar had supported him since his (i.e. Corvin's) youth.<sup>143</sup> Yet it is highly probable that it was thanks to Balthasar Batthyány, himself captain of Medve before 1490, and Corvin's *familiaris* in 1490, that he joined the duke's entourage sometime before that date. The government of Medve had traditionally been linked to that of the twin castles of Rakonok and Lukavec (Lukavec, CRO), which were thus also subjected to Balthasar and his colleague, Bernard Turóci. It was as castellan of Medve that the former obtained his first possessions in Slavonia.

In 1494, however, we already find him at the head of the equally important castle of Varasd (Varaždin, CRO) as the duke's captain there.<sup>144</sup> In the same

137 Indeed, in 1475 we find Andrew Alapi and Balthasar Batthyány as co-owners of the Batthyány lands in Somogy: MNL OL, DL 100 856.

138 MNL OL, DF 233 204.

139 Antal Áldásy, "Batthyány Boldizsár és Benedek czímeres levele 1500-ból [The Coat of Arms of Balthasar and Benedict Batthyány from 1500], *Turul* 12 (1894): 94–96.

140 On the career of Benedict see Ferenc Soós, *Magyarország kincstartói 1340–1540* [The Treasurers of Hungary 1340–1540], (Budapest: Argumentum, 1999), 54–55, 57, 61. Atyina: MNL OL, DL 33 230.

141 MNL OL, DL 32 874.

142 MNL OL, DL 47 563: "Item quia magnificus dominus Benedictus de Batthyan est frater meus carnalis indivisus."

143 MNL OL, DF 233 228: "ad cumulatissima obsequiorum suorum merita, que in pluribus locis iuxta sue possibilitatis exigenciam cum sincera fidei et fidelitatis constancia exhibere curavit, cuius obsequia non peregrino testimonio verum oculata fide conspeximus;" DL 32 874: "a juvenili nostra etate."

144 MNL OL, DF 255 929.



year he is also attested as Corvin's man administering the thirtieth of Zagreb.<sup>145</sup> In February 1495 it was Balthasar Alapi who, together with John Gyulai, represented the duke in the latter's case against his treacherous castellan, Peter Poki.<sup>146</sup> At the end of 1496 he was appointed as the duke's viceban together with Martin (Marcinko) Predrihoi, with whom he is also mentioned as castellan of Bozsjákó (Božjakovina, CRO), in the county of Zagreb, in 1497.<sup>147</sup> Late in 1497, when Corvin was temporarily removed from the banship, Balthasar continued to serve him as his castellan of Nagykemlék, but also as that of Krupa (Krupa, CRO) and Japra (Japar-grad, CRO), in the county of Zagreb, for in 1502 the duke asserted that Balthasar had been governing those two castles for eight years then.<sup>148</sup>

As soon as Corvin was restored to the banal office, Balthasar returned as his viceban, and continued to function as such until the duke's death in 1504, at first together with Marcinko, then with Peter Bocskai, and finally with Bernard Turóci. In October 1498 he was listed among the leading *familiaries* of the duke who were engaged with him in the defence of Croatia.<sup>149</sup> As a reward of his services he received from his lord in 1500 the estate of Vokovina (Vukovina, CRO) in the county of Zagreb with a *castellum* erected there.<sup>150</sup> At the same time he also purchased further possessions in the same county.<sup>151</sup> In 1502, in exchange for the enormous sum of 8000 florins, which he had thus far spent on the defence of the castles of Krupa and Japra, he received from Corvin the castle and estate of Nagykemlék in Körös by perpetual right.<sup>152</sup> Within a couple of years he had thus accumulated a landed wealth in Slavonia which amounted to some 300 inhabited tenant plots, and included a castle and a *castellum*.

In the late spring of 1505, after a brief vacancy of the banal seat, Alapi and Turóci resumed the office of viceban for some months, before the deputies of the new bans were finally appointed. Consequently, he went over to Croatia, first as viceban of that realm and later as captain of the royal light cavalry detachment there.<sup>153</sup> In December 1509 we still find him in the Croatian castle of Bihács (Bihać, BH) in the company of Andrew Both, although what exactly he was doing there is uncertain.<sup>154</sup> What is sure is that he was not a partisan of

145 Ioannes Baptista Tkalčić, ed., *Monumenta historica liberae regiae civitatis Zagrabiae*, vol VIII of XIV (Zagrabiae: n.p., 1889–1932), 91.

146 Kubinyi, "Ernusz Zsigmond," 331.

147 MNL OL, DF 256 800.

148 MNL OL, DL 32 874.

149 MNL OL, DF 279 501.

150 MNL OL, DF 255 506. In fact, Alapi already bought these estates from the duke four years before: DF 261 789.

151 MNL OL, DF 255 507.

152 MNL OL, DL 32 874.

153 MNL OL, DF 255 212 (1508): "capitaneo gencium nostrorum levis armature in regno nostro Croacie alias vero vicebano regni eiusdem nostri Croacie."

154 MNL OL, DL 46 925.



the rebellious ban, for in the meantime he had been appointed by the king as ban of Jajce, and functioned as such until 1511.<sup>155</sup> In July 1513 he was compelled to pledge his castle of Nagykemlék to his own wife for 4300 florins in order to pay his men their dues on account of their service at Jajce.<sup>156</sup> At the end of the same year he returned to Slavonia as the deputy of ban Peter Beriszló, at first alone, and later in the company of Balthasar Batthyány. In September 1515 he was ordered by Beriszló to mobilise the troops of Slavonia and his own for an expedition to provision Jajce.<sup>157</sup> He remained Beriszló's deputy until at least the spring of 1518. His removal from the office of viceban seems to have been connected to the "very great discord and enmity" between archbishop Bakóc and palatine Perényi on the one hand, and ban Beriszló on the other, which were reported on during the summer of 1518, and resulted in the mutual mobilisation of troops.<sup>158</sup> The exact nature of this conflict is not clear; yet a year later Thomas Pető of Gerse, in a letter written to Balthasar Alapi, while lamenting over the latter's absence from Buda at the time when palatine Perényi died, urged him to be present at the planned congregation at Siklós, lest something evil should be done to him, "by word or letter", by the sons of the late palatine.<sup>159</sup> Whatever the case, a year later Alapi was again a member of the royal court, receiving as such 700 florins as a salary.<sup>160</sup>

Balthasar prepared his last will in 1524 in the castle of Nagykemlék. By that time already his burial site had been prepared in the church of Saint Briccus beneath the castle. Its most important stipulation was aimed at a future division between his own heirs and those of Benedict Batthyány of all the possessions acquired by himself and his brother. By the time the testament was drafted Balthasar was living with his third wife, Helen Sárkány,<sup>161</sup> from a well-to-do noble family in the county of Zala, which had entered the baronage by the appointment of Ambrose Sárkány as judge royal just a few months before.<sup>162</sup> He also mentioned his second wife, Barbara Swampek, in all

155 Thallóczy–Horváth, *Jajcza*, CCLXXIII.

156 MNL OL, DF 219 219.

157 MNL OL, DF 257 166.

158 "Marino Sanuto Világkrónikájának Magyarországot illető tudósításai" [The Reports concerning Hungary of the World Chronicle of Marino Sanuto], I–III, ed. Gusztáv Wenzel, *Magyar Történelmi Tár*, 2. folyam, 14 (1869), 24 (1877), 25 (1878): 3, 101–02: "come erano nasute gradissime discordie et inimitie el reverendissimo Strigoniense et el conte palatin da una parte, et il reverendo Vesprimiense ban de Corvatia del altra, per certe loro rixe particular."

159 MNL OL, DL 93 801.

160 MNL OL, DL 104 370.

161 Béla Iványi Dr, *A körmendi levéltár memorabiliái* [The Memorabilia of the Archives of Körmend], (Körmend: n.p., 1942), 52–53.

162 András Kubinyi, "Egy üzletelő és diplomata várúr Mohács előtt: Ákosházi Sárkány Ambrus" [Lord Ambrose Sárkány of Ákosháza, Businessman and Diplomat before Mohács], in Nóra Pamer, ed., *Gerő László nyolcvanötödik születésnapjára. Tanulmányok* [Studies on the Occasion of the Eighty-Fifth Birthday of László Gerő] (Budapest: Országos Műemlékvédelmi Hivatal, 1994), 263–83.

probability the daughter of Sylvester Swampek of Lothomberg (Ljutomer, SLO).<sup>163</sup> Yet for some reason he failed to refer to his first consort, called Catherine, who was the daughter of a merchant from Zagreb, and from whom he had at least a daughter called Barbara.<sup>164</sup> His son, John, who continued the family after Mohács, and his sister, Catherine, both mentioned in the last will, were born either from Barbara or from Helen.<sup>165</sup>

### 2.2.2. Bakolcai (de Bakolcha, Bakowcha)

In 1495 the estates of Bakolca and Sziget figured with almost 200 inhabited tenant plots, a landed wealth of considerable size,<sup>166</sup> yet its origins and devolution present problems impossible to be solved on the basis of the available evidence. The family may originally have settled in the county of Baranya, at least some of them were named after the village of Koromszó there.<sup>167</sup> Yet they also had considerable possessions in the northern part of the county of Somogy (parts of Lulla, Gyöngöd and Jaba, the whole of Gyugy, Belder and Tab, further off Miháld, Büki and Keleviz),<sup>168</sup> and in Bodrog, where they possessed Szeremlyén.<sup>169</sup> This latter was later owned by the Benedictine abbey of Báta, of which they were the patrons, or at least pretended to be.<sup>170</sup> In 1345 Egidius, the son of Peter, *honestus magister*, is already referred to as

163 MNL OL, DL 47 563; DF 219 219.

164 Tkalčić, *Monumenta*, vol. XI, 66: "proba et honesta domina Katherina filia condam Stephani institoris olim concivis nostri nunc vero consors legitima nobilis Balthasaris de Alap;" MNL OL, DF 255 512.

165 After 1526 John Alapi was cavalry captain in Slavonia, and briefly deputy of the captain general in the Slavonian and Croatian marches (Géza Pálffy, "Egy fontos adalék történeti földrajzunk és közigazgatás-történetünk históriájához: az 1558. évi horvát-szlavón közös országgyűlés meghívólevele" [An Important Addition to the History of Historical Geography and Administration: the Letter of Invitation for the Common Assembly of Croatia and Slavonia from 1558], *Fons* 10 (2003): 242; Idem, "Kerületi és végvidéki főkapitányok és főkapitány-helyettesek Magyarországon a 16–17. században" [Arch-Captains and their Deputies in the Hungarian Border Defense in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries], *Történelmi Szemle* 39 (1997): 283; his son, Caspar became arch-captain in the march of Kanizsa and later ban of Croatia and Slavonia (Pálffy, "Kerületi és végvidéki főkapitányok," 279, 275.)

166 Adamček–Kampuš, *Popisi*, 8.

167 Engel, *Középkori magyar genealógia*, Bakolcai (Koromszói).

168 MNL OL, DL 99 932, DL 2846.

169 *Zichy család okmánytára*, vol. I, 606.

170 Beatrix F. Romhányi, *Kolostorok és társaskáptalanok a középkori Magyarországon* [Monasteries and Collegiate Chapters in Medieval Hungary], (Budapest: Pytheas, 2000), 11; Georgius Fejér, ed., *Codex diplomaticus Hungariae ecclesiasticus et civilis*, vol. VIII of XI (Budae: n.p., 1829–1844), 4, 244: "prefati monasterii falso praetendunt se fore patronos" (Egidius Bakolcai and Stephen Koromszói).

possessing the estate of Bakolca in the county of Körös.<sup>171</sup> This Egidius maintained that the possession of *Konchian*, which lay within the boundaries of Bakolca itself, belonged to him by right of inheritance, and founded his claim upon a charter of king Béla IV, in which the ruler had restored to a certain *comes* Stephen, son of Peter, the possession of *Konchyan*.<sup>172</sup> In 1345 *Konchyan* was in fact in the hands of Egidius Bakolcai, then referred to as *Kechkonchon* (*recte*: Kethkonchon),<sup>173</sup> which can be identified as the twin villages of Alsó and Felső Kuchan which turn up in the 1470s. The two major blocks of land owned by the family, namely Bakolca and Sziget (*Zygeth*), were neighbours to that of Darnóc from the south and the north, and Sziget was bordered by the estate of Monoszló (Podravska Moslavina) to the east. Darnóc (originally Novák) and Monoszló are known to have originally been in the possession of the Monoszló kindred, and Darnóc, as we will see it below, had some evident links with Bakolca later, but, in the absence of seals as a means of identification, it is impossible to go any further. Anyway, the dispersion of the known lands of the family in several counties, their size, as well as the fact that master Egidius (the name itself is characteristic of the Monoszló kindred) married the daughter of Paul Garai of the Dorozsma kindred, a prominent figure in the first half of the fourteenth century,<sup>174</sup> certainly hint at fairly illustrious origins. The subsequent history of the family is all the more obscure, however.

Prior to 1402 Demetrius, son of Nicholas held some villages in the county of Baranya which had been pledged to his mother by his stepfather, John Besenyő.<sup>175</sup> In 1433 Sigismund was member of the royal entourage at the imperial coronation in Rome.<sup>176</sup> In 1473 bishop Oswald Tuz of Zagreb held portions of the estate of Bakolca, presumably together with the estate of Darnóc, but it is unknown how he obtained them. In 1469 it was for John, bishop of Pécs and ban of Slavonia that his vicebans occupied the estate of Darnóc, and, since his colleague was then John Tuz, it is reasonable to suppose that it was in this way that the castle and its belongings came into the possession of the Tuz family.<sup>177</sup> In that year (1473) bishop Oswald was confirmed by the king in the possession of parts of Bakolca, and Sigismund, son of Demetrius was listed among the neighbours.<sup>178</sup> Another neighbour named then was George Bebek of Pelsőc, who also held portions of Bakolca,

171 Tade Smičiklas et al., eds., *Codex diplomaticus regni Croatiae, Dalmatiae et Slavoniae*, vol. XI of XVIII (Zagrabiae: n.p., 1904–1990), 225–26.

172 MNL OL, DL 2799.

173 Smičiklas, *Codex diplomaticus*, vol. XI, 225–26.

174 Engel, *Középkori magyar genealógia*, Bakolcai (Koromszói).

175 *Zsigmondkori Oklevéltár*, vol. II, no. 1538.

176 Csukovits, "Nagy utazás," 33.

177 MNL OL, DL 74 533.

178 MNL OL, DL 17 501.

which he pledged to the Polish Jane of Csánig, *sororius* of bishop Oswald.<sup>179</sup> It was Francis Bebek (died in 1406) who had possessed the estate of Darnóc by right of pledge, and it seems probable that the roots of the family's presence in the estate of Bakolca go back to that period.<sup>180</sup> Three years later Peter, son of Stephen Bakolcai, representing his kinsmen, the sons of Demetrius, Sigismund, Stephen and Ladislás, exchanged their possessions at Bakolca and its appurtenances with the same Jane of Csánig for 1000 florins and some of the latter's villages in the county of Zala.<sup>181</sup> Henceforth Jane bore the name of Bakolca,<sup>182</sup> but Sigismund, son of Demetrius also seems to have retained at least some portions of his paternal estates;<sup>183</sup> in 1481 he was one of the noble jurors in the county of Kőrös at the congregation of Zagreb,<sup>184</sup> and a year later he is mentioned as a royal man.<sup>185</sup> In 1511 the tenants of the widow of the same Sigismund were mentioned among the neighbours of the town of Szalatnok.<sup>186</sup> Ladislás Bakolcai joined the service of duke Lawrence Újlaki, and became his castellan of Racsá before 1518; his son, Christopher, was likewise in the service of the Újlaki family.<sup>187</sup>

In the meantime, however, important changes had taken place. Jane of Csánig appears to have disappeared from the region by 1495, although he certainly had two sons living in 1500,<sup>188</sup> and his portions apparently reverted to the Bakolcai. Three years before the share of Peter Bakolcai in the estate had come into the hands of John Pečiban (Pechiban) of Čomorag (Chomorag), formerly viceban of Croatia,<sup>189</sup> as well as of Andrew and Leonard Dacsó of Őr.<sup>190</sup> The appearance of John in the region should perhaps be linked to Matthias Geréb, ban of Croatia from 1483 to 1489, who owned together with his brothers the neighbouring estate of Valpó. As for Andrew and Leonard Dacsó of Őr, they came from the distant county of Ung. Leonard made a career in the county of Baranya in the service of the Geréb family, where he became

179 MNL OL, DL 103 811, DL 106 886, DF 252 430 (the bishop's *sororius*). Jane is referred to as *comes de Zalatnok* in 1477, which means that he was in the service of bishop Oswald of Zagreb (DF 231 675). This Jane seems to have been the son of the Jane who had apparently come to Hungary with king Wladislaw I, and settled in the county of Vas: Engel, *Archontológia*, vol. II, 144, and MNL OL, DF 252 218.

180 Engel, *Archontológia*, vol. I, 297.

181 MNL OL, DL 17 884.

182 Jane de Bakolca: István Tringli, "Az 1481. évi szlavóniai közgyűlés" [The Slavonian Judicial Assembly in 1481], in *Tanulmányok Borsa Iván tiszteletére* [Studies in Honour of Iván Borsa], ed. Enikő Csukovits, (Budapest: Magyar Országos Levéltár, 1998), 316.

183 MNL OL, DL 19 829.

184 Tringli, "Szlavóniai közgyűlés," 314.

185 MNL OL, DF 275 093.

186 MNL OL, DF 252 259.

187 MNL OL, DL 23 000.

188 Neither he nor his sons figure in any of the tax lists from 1495 on.

189 MNL OL, DL 88 712.

190 MNL OL, DL 19 829.

their castellan of Valpó, and was hence called Porkoláb.<sup>191</sup> Interestingly, in 1495 he alone was listed among the three of them as owning parts of Bakolca. John Pečiban had a son, equally called John, and two daughters, Sophie and Margaret, who married Vitus Horvát of Szeglak and the Styrian George of Swamberk (Schwanberg, AU) respectively. The latter tried to obtain the portions of the late John, but to no avail. By 1516 a *castellum* had been erected at Bakolca, although we do not know by which among the co-owners.<sup>192</sup> Around 1520 Leonard was still owning a portion of Sziget, alongside the widows of Sigismund and Ladislás Bakolcai, whereas Bakolca was registered under the widow of Sigismund alone.<sup>193</sup>

In view of the obscure prehistory of the family it is all the more interesting that the wife of duke Lawrence Újlaki, called Magdalena, certainly belonged to the Bakolcai family, even though she cannot be linked to any of its known members, nor it is known what lay behind this apparent *mésalliance*. Apart from the service of Ladislás and Christopher Bakolcai as Újlaki *familiares*, the only sign of a closer contact between the two families is the intervention of Lawrence Újlaki in 1520 on behalf of the widow of Sigismund Bakolcai with the collectors of the Slavonian tax.<sup>194</sup> After Mohács Francis Bakolcai received the bishopric of Csanád from king Ferdinand, and in 1529 Ladislás Mór of Csula, who had married the widow of duke Lawrence, petitioned for him, referred to as his kinsman (*consanguineo meo*), that of Vác.<sup>195</sup>

### 2.2.3. The descendants of Belus (Beloš)

#### 3/a. Gorbonoki (de Gorbonok, Kloštar Podravski)

The family descended from the famous Serbian Belus (Beloš), ban and palatine, who played such an important role in the political life of Hungary in the middle of the twelfth century.<sup>196</sup> We do not know how he acquired his

191 In 1485 he receives a royal donation as a *familiaris* of Peter Geréb: MNL OL, DL 107601; castellan of Valpó: DL 20 236 (1494); in 1505 he is one of the envoys of the county of Baranya at the diet of Rákös: DL 39 335.

192 MNL OL, DL 33 841.

193 MNL OL, DF 282 508.

194 MNL OL, DL 104 383.

195 Emilij Laszowski, ed., *Monumenta Habsburgica Regni Croatiae, Dalmatiae et Slavoniae*, vol. I (1526–1530), II (1531–1540), III (1541–1544), (Zagreb: JAZU, 1914–1917), vol. I, 216.

196 Mór Wertner, *A magyar nemzetségek a XIV. század közepéig* [The Hungarian Kindreds until the Middle of the Fourteenth Century], vol I of 2 (Temesvár: Csanád-egyházmegyei könyvsajtó, 1891–1892), 101–02. Although there is almost a century between ban Belus and the Stephen, son of ban Belus, who is surely the ancestor of the Gorbonoki family, the name Belus is so characteristic that there is no room for doubt. Moreover, the possession called Lapathk, which was ordered by the king to be restored to Stephen, son of Belus and his brothers in 1280, was still in the possession of the Gorbonoki in the fifteenth century as Lopathkovo

possessions in Slavonia, but in view of his origins royal donation is the only possible solution. Nor do we know what the original extension of his Slavonian lands was. By the time we can grasp the Gorbonoki lands in the sources they are already limited to Gorbonok itself and its appurtenances, but it is certain that originally they were more extensive, especially if we add the possessions later owned by the Kerhen and Budor families to be treated below. Besides the title of *comes*, the fact that one of the wives of the Belus who lived around the middle of the thirteenth century, was the daughter of ban Apay from the Gutkeled kindred indicates the family's high social status.<sup>197</sup>

The descendants of Belus soon split up into three different branches, only one of which came to play a role of importance in the county of Körös.<sup>198</sup> Beke, the son of Stephen was probably ispán of Körös during the banship of Stephen Babonić.<sup>199</sup> His son, Stephen was ispán of Verőce in the service of duke Stephen and later tax collector of his widow.<sup>200</sup> Stephen, son of Beke who was alispán of Veszprém in 1358 may also be identical with him, although we do not know how he came into contact with the Kölcsi brothers who were then ispáns of Veszprém.<sup>201</sup>

The son of Stephen, Ladislav joined Stephen Lackfi of Csáktornya (Čakovec, CRO), and was named among his leading supporters in the charter of palatine Nicholas Garai in 1385.<sup>202</sup> During the short reign of Charles II he was member of his court,<sup>203</sup> then returned to Lackfi and became his ispán of

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(MNL OL, DF 231 687). It is interesting that neither Mór Wertner, who collected all the relevant information, nor Pál Engel, who prepared the family tree of the Gorbonoki, had the idea of connecting to each other the persons called Belus.

197 Borsa, "Belosovci Kerhen család," 6.

198 All members of the Gorbonoki family who played some role in the fourteenth to the early sixteenth centuries descended from Stephen, son of Beke, and their descent can be reconstructed fairly well. Yet we find throughout the period persons who evidently belonged to the Gorbonoki family, but enjoyed much less prestige and by no means belonged to the noble élite. These persons are listed, mainly upon the basis of the Balassa archives, in Borsa, "Belosovci Kerhen család." Among them, the Garab of Gorbonok family surely descended from Garab, son of Nicholas, who is attested in 1372 (Smičiklas, *Codex diplomaticus*, vol. XIV, 416–17).

199 Engel, *Archontológia*, vol. I, 252.

200 Ibid., vol. I, 230; Smičiklas, *Codex diplomaticus*, vol. XII, 262: "collector marturinarum domine nostre ducisse"

201 Engel, *Archontológia*, vol. I, 232. It should be remarked that the ancestors of the neighbouring family of the Budor of Budorvc also called themselves of Gorbonok, and later remembered to have originally come from the county of Veszprém. See Pálffy, "Budróci Budor család," 929. See also the chapter on the Budor family below.

202 Szilárd Sütő, *Anjou-Magyarország alkonya. Magyarország politikai története Nagy Lajostól Zsigmondig, az 1384–1387. évi belviszályok okmánytárával* [The Waning of Angevin Hungary. The Political History of Hungary from Louis the Great to Sigismund, with the Charters relating to the Internal Strife in 1384–1387], vol. I of 2 (Szeged: Belvedere Meridionale, 2003), 88.

203 Elemér Varjú and Béla Iványi, eds., *Oklevéltár Tomaj nemzetségbeli losonczi Bánffy család történetéhez* [Charters Illuminating the History of the Bánffy Family of the Tomaj Kindred], vol. I of 2 (Budapest: n.p., 1908–1928), 378.



Varasd.<sup>204</sup> Yet the fall of Lackfi did not prove disastrous to him, for his son was among the nobles of Körös county who guaranteed that Stephen Fáncs, sentenced to capital punishment for having supported Lackfi, would remain faithful to king Sigismund thereafter.<sup>205</sup> This second Ladislás was not so lucky, however; he was involved in the revolt against Sigismund and his possessions were accordingly confiscated and donated to George Dombai of the Győr kindred. Although later he managed to acquire a letter of pardon from the king, at the congregation of 1408 it was declared void with reference to the fact that Ladislás had ignored the royal decree of amnesty in 1403.<sup>206</sup> Thus the Dombai family obtained portions of the Gorbonoki estates which they held until their extinction in the sixteenth century.

Despite the infidelity of Ladislás his brothers, Michael and John later regained the royal favour.<sup>207</sup> In return for their otherwise unknown services in July 1430 their orphans, Nicholas and Briccius were confirmed in their family properties in the county of Körös.<sup>208</sup> The son of Michael, Nicholas was ispán of Zagreb in the service of ban Matko Tallóci in 1444. This is the only known instance of their “public career” in the fifteenth century, which is definitely not in keeping with their past services and their landed wealth. The son of John, Briccius was already of age in 1437,<sup>209</sup> and died before 1466.<sup>210</sup> The decrees issued by ban Matko Tallóci and the Slavonian nobility in 1439 were signed by Briccius Gorbonoki,<sup>211</sup> which may indicate that he was a member of the banal chancery, although there is no trace of him there later. His son, Nicholas seems to have died relatively young before 1478, for he left two underage sons, Stephen and Thomas.<sup>212</sup> Nicholas is referred to as an arbitrator in 1469.<sup>213</sup>

204 Engel, *Archontológia*, vol. I, 224.

205 *Zsigmondkori Oklevéltár*, vol. I, no. 5355.

206 MNL OL, DF 288 468.

207 That the Gorbonoki faced serious difficulties after 1408 is proved by a curious draft preserved in the Balassa archives (Borsa Iván, ed., *A Balassa család levéltára 1193–1526* [The Archives of the Balassa family 1193–1526] (Budapest: Magyar Országos Levéltár, 1990), no. 256), the interpretation of which appears an extremely complicated task.

208 MNL OL, DF 231 687. Since both sons were still minors, they evidently had someone to intervene for them, but, in the lack of the original charter, we do not know who he was. Michael died before 11 December 1416 (*Zsigmondkori Oklevéltár*, vol. V, no. 2504), presumably in the Bosnian campaign.

209 MNL OL, DF 231 687: “jam tunc legitime etatis.”

210 MNL OL, DL 102 161: “Nicolaus filius quondam Briccii de Gorbonok.”

211 Falsely rendered as Brunus in Ioannes Kukuljević aliter Bassani de Sacchi ed., *Jura regni Croatiae, Dalmatiae et Slavoniae*, part III of 3 (Zagrabiae: n.p., 1861–1862), 20. The original: MNL OL, DF 268 079.

212 MNL OL, DF 231 687. I do not know whose son Emeric Gorbonoki was who was mentioned sometime in the 1470s together with Nicholas (DF 255 817). His father may have been the Nicholas, son of Egidius parvus of Gorbonok, who appears in 1404 (DL 8901).

213 MNL OL, DL 16 793.



The great comeback was the work of Stephen, son of Nicholas. His mother was Helen, daughter of George Sulyok of Lekcse, viceban of Macsó.<sup>214</sup> The beginnings of his career are impossible to reconstruct, but we have reasons to suppose that it was not a smooth start. By 1481 both his parents were dead, for then, still underage, he was represented by his grandmother before the chapter of Csázma.<sup>215</sup> The problems sprang from the joint lordship with the Dombai family at Gorbonok. As we have seen above, one of the sons of Nicholas Dombai, Francis, had married the daughter of Peter Gudovci, deputy-prothonotary of Slavonia, and pledged his portion together with the *castellum* of Gorbonok to his father-in-law for 820 florins. Stephen Gorbonoki turned to the ban of Slavonia, Ladislás Egervári, whose family had possessed some land in the neighbourhood since the middle of the fourteenth century.<sup>216</sup> After the death of king Matthias Egervári captivated Peter Gudovci and forced him to hand over the *castellum* and its appurtenances, “officially” in exchange for the same sum, but practically without paying anything.<sup>217</sup> But Egervári had his own axe to grind, and, having restored Gorbonok to Stephen, in 1494 he contracted with the latter a treaty of mutual inheritance.<sup>218</sup> It must have been connected to this affair that the two *castella* at Gorbonok and Racsicaszentistván were taken and burnt by David Dombai sometime before 1495, for the charters kept there were said to have been taken to Egervári’s castle of Velike.<sup>219</sup> In March 1492 Stephen Gorbonoki was certainly a member of the ban’s entourage, although for some reason we do not find him among those Slavonian noblemen who sealed the document acknowledging the Habsburg inheritance on this occasion.<sup>220</sup>

Stephen Gorbonoki married the widow of John Both of Bajna, Apollonia Csapi.<sup>221</sup> With his marriage he acquired considerable estates outside Slavonia, and another fortification, that of (Bagolya)Szentgyörgy.<sup>222</sup> In 1495 and 1507 he is also attested as having a considerable part of the Szencsei lands, namely at

214 The father-in-law of Nicholas Gorbonoki is George Sulyok: MNL OL, DF 255 817. She is called Helen, who married after the death of her first husband Ladislás Ervencei: DL 103 879.

215 MNL OL, DL 100 959.

216 MNL OL, DL 4376.

217 See the chapter on the Gudovci family.

218 Miklós Komjáthy, “A somogyi konvent II. Ulászló-kori oklevelei az országos levéltárban. 11. közlemény” [The Charters of the Convent of Somogy from the Reign of Wladislaw II in the Hungarian National Archives. Eleventh Part], in *Somogy megye múltjából (Levéltári évkönyv)* 14, ed. József Kanyar (Kaposvár: Somogy Megyei Levéltár, 1983), no. 146. The huge estate of Velike was of course excepted from the contract; Egervári pledged his other possessions in the county of Körös and some of the appurtenances of the castle of Szenticsnyak.

219 MNL OL, DL 33 899.

220 MNL OL, DL 38 645. This document is a payroll of those Slavonian and Croatian noblemen who belonged to the entourage of ban Egervári at Buda in February–March 1492.

221 MNL OL, DL 75 733, DF 233 492.

222 MNL OL, DF 279 486, DL 75 732.

Szencseszentmihály, although it is not known by what right.<sup>223</sup> In 1503 he became member of the court (*aulicus*), and a year later ban of Jajce.<sup>224</sup> His career in the court may have been initiated by John Bornemissza, treasurer from 1500 and castellan of Buda after 1506. Bornemissza was the third wife of Helen Csapi, sister of Apollonia. Stephen Gorbonoki and Bornemissza were jointly given the estates of David Dombai after the heirless death of the latter around 1504.<sup>225</sup> Moreover, a third daughter, Elizabeth Csapi, was the wife of Albert Lónyai, captain of Senj in the first years of the sixteenth century. The political importance of Stephen Gorbonoki is shown by the fact that when early in 1509 his estates were devastated by George Bátori, palatine Emeric Perényi himself mediated in the affair.<sup>226</sup>

Yet in the meantime the portions of David Dombai had passed into the hands of Bartholomew Beriszló, prior of Vrana.<sup>227</sup> It was for this reason that Stephen Gorbonoki and John Bornemissza contracted a treaty with Balthasar Batthyány in order to regain the prior's portions, but the effort seems to have remained futile.<sup>228</sup> Another transaction apparently further complicated the already confused situation of the Gorbonoki/Dombai lands. For Stephen Gorbonoki pledged all his inherited and acquired lands to another Batthyány, namely treasurer Benedict, for 7000 florins.<sup>229</sup> Since Stephen had no offspring, this act must have been intended to favour the expansion of Benedict in Slavonia, where he had evident territorial ambitions.<sup>230</sup> At the time of the heirless death of Stephen sometime before 1512 parts of Gorbonok were still in the hands of Beriszló, and in that year all the escheated possessions of Stephen Gorbonoki and David Dombai were donated to John Tahi, the prior's nephew by his sister.<sup>231</sup>

### 3/b. Kerhen of Belosovc

The Kerhen family had a common origin with the Gorbonoki; they were separated perhaps as early as the late thirteenth century.<sup>232</sup> The possession of Belosovc itself, after which they were named, evidently preserves the memory of Beloš/Belus, although we do not know of which among the persons bearing this name. Yet, judging from their "family" name, they seem to have also

223 Adamček–Kampuš, *Popisi*, 10, 30.

224 Thallóczy–Horváth, *Jajcza*, 174; *ibid.*, CCLXXIII.

225 MNL OL, DL 101 385.

226 MNL OL, DL 25 503 (palatine Perényi to George Kanizsai): "dominus Georgius de Bathor sua bona depopulari fecit et pro concordia disponenda ad nos vocare possumus."

227 Adamček–Kampuš, *Popisi*, 34.

228 MNL OL, DL 101 385.

229 MNL OL, DL 106 083/ 150–51 *ecw.*

230 He obtained the castle of Atyina from Joseph Somi sometime between 1504 and 1507 (MNL OL, DL 108 331, Adamček–Kampuš, *Popisi*, 32).

231 MNL OL, DF 268 266.

232 Borsa, "Belosovci Kerhen család," *passim*.

founded the possession of Kerhevina in the region of Fejérkő, to which the Gorbonoki never had any right. Moreover, the Kerhen also split into two branches, only one of which played an important role in the history of Slavonia. The exact relationship between them is not known, however.

There existed throughout the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries a family whose members were constantly called Kerhen/Kerhenfy/Kerhnewych and always bore the name of the possession of Kerhevina.<sup>233</sup> They were frequently designated as royal men, and in 1491 Anthony and Ladislav *Kerhnyewych* were even castellans of Glogonca (Glogovnica, CRO) in the service of Bartholomew, prior of Vrana.<sup>234</sup> Yet they were never titled *egregius* and do not even seem to have had portions elsewhere. Their settlement around Fejérkő may somehow have been connected to the events referred to in a strange document drafted after 1415, mentioned above,<sup>235</sup> although it is far from sure. The distance between them and the other branch of the Kerhen family must have been considerable, anyway.<sup>236</sup> We do not know what were the origins of the sobriquet Kerhen, which was first applied in 1436 to the ancestor of the family who seems to have lived in the last third of the fourteenth century, and subsequently turned into a family name.<sup>237</sup>

In any case, the latter did not play any role worthy of mention in the Angevin era either. Before 1429 Stephen, son of Nicholas and his kinsmen went on a pilgrimage to an unknown destination,<sup>238</sup> and four years later the same Stephen was member of king Sigismund's entourage in Italy.<sup>239</sup> How he joined the court is not known, however, and none of his relatives followed in his footsteps. It may have been due to the support of his more influential kinsmen from the Gorbonoki branch, although there is no solid evidence to underpin this hypothesis. What seems certain is that the consequent career of his nephew, Michael Kerhen, was in all probability rooted in the latter's talents and ambitions and was by no means predicted by the previous history of the family.

233 MNL OL, DF 255 808 (1469): "Mathias et Benedictus de Kerhnyewyna;" DF 276 827 (1475): "Nicolaus Kerhen de Kerhnewyna" (he also figures on the list of 1474); Elemér Mályusz, "A szlavóniai és horvátországi pálos kolostorok oklevelei az Országos Levéltárban," Parts 1–11, *Levéltári Közlemények* 3 (1925), 5 (1927), 6 (1928), 7 (1929), 8 (1930), 9 (1931), 10 (1932), 11 (1933), 12 (1934), 13 (1935), [hereafter cited as *Levéltári Közlemények*]; 3, 155–56. (1483): "Benedictus seu Nicolaus Kerhenfy de Kerhnewyna;" MNL OL, DF 231 881 (1493): "Benedictus et Ladislaus Kerhnewych de Krehnewyna;" (!) DL 34 323 (1508): "Ladislao Kerhen de Kernyewyna."

234 MNL OL, DF 255 911: "Anthonius et Ladislaus Kerhnyewych castellani [...] venerabilis et magnifici Bartholomei prioris Aurane in castello suo Golgonczeni."

235 Borsa, *Balassa család levéltára*, no. 256.

236 Some at least among them may have descended from the Blaise *de Kerhenyoucz*, whose son, Martin is mentioned in 1412 (*Zsigmondkori Oklevéltár*, vol. III, no. 2796).

237 Borsa, "Belosovci Kerhen család," 7.

238 Borsa, *Balassa család oklevéltára*, no. 286.

239 Csukovits, "Nagy utazás," 33.

He is first mentioned in 1461 together with his brothers, Valentine and Peter, sons of George.<sup>240</sup> He started his career as a *familiaris* of Nicholas Dombai, castellan of Atyina, himself in the joint service of Ladislás Garai and Nicholas Újlaki.<sup>241</sup> Nicholas Dombai was the son of George who had acquired portions in the Gorbonoki estates in the first years of the fifteenth century. Yet Michael did not follow Dombai to his new posts assigned to him by his “perpetual” lord, Nicholas Újlaki, but joined another local lord, George Forster, castellan of Szentgyörgy.<sup>242</sup> His first two lords as well as the persons in the company of whom he served them make it clear that in these years Michael still belonged to the second rank of the local nobility, whose career was normally focused on the neighbouring castle.

In 1477, however, we already see him in the immediate service of a magnate family; he became castellan of Kapronca (Koprivnica, CRO) for Sigismund Ernuszt, bishop of Pécs.<sup>243</sup> Six years later he joined the new ban of Slavonia, Blaise Magyar, who appointed him as one of his vicebans of Croatia, and thus he even left his homeland for a time.<sup>244</sup> Upon the removal of Blaise Magyar from the banship he became a *familiaris* of his successor, Matthias Geréb of Vingárt, whom he served as viceban of Slavonia for almost five years, one of the longest terms in this office ever. Interestingly enough, he remained castellan of Kapronca during his service as viceban, which means that his allegiance was not altogether transferred to the ban.<sup>245</sup> Late in 1486 he was one of the representatives of the Slavonian nobility at Buda,<sup>246</sup> and in July 1488 acted again as one of the envoys sent by the nobility of the counties of Körös and Zagreb to King Matthias, then in Vienna.<sup>247</sup> As a proof of his ascending influence, in April 1490 he was one of the delegated judges in the case between Oswald, bishop of Zagreb and Stephen Csupor at Buda.<sup>248</sup> Two years later, in March 1492 he was eighth among the envoys of Croatia and Slavonia at the assembly of Buda, fifth if the Slavonians are counted alone.<sup>249</sup>

In 1493 he briefly returned to the office of viceban in the service of ban Ladislás Egervári. A year later, however, he was already in the service of bishop Oswald as his castellan at Garics (Garić, CRO).<sup>250</sup> Strangely enough, later he seems again to have returned to the Dombai family, this time to David, the son of Nicholas.<sup>251</sup> The situation was apparently the same as twenty five

240 MNL OL, DL 33 882.

241 MNL OL, DF 255 801.

242 MNL OL, DL 103 765.

243 MNL OL, DF 262 134.

244 MNL OL, DL 33 897.

245 MNL OL, DF 262 151.

246 MNL OL, DF 268 110.

247 MNL OL, DF 268 111.

248 MNL OL, DL 102 244.

249 He is also on the list of noble followers paid by ban Ladislás Egervári: MNL OL, DL 38 645.

250 MNL OL, DL 101 196.

251 Thallóczy–Horváth, *Jajcza*, 193.

years before, for the lord whom David himself served was duke Lawrence Újlaki. Yet now Michael was by no means a common *familiaris*, for he was designated together with Balthasar Batthyány as executor of David's last will, and even received from him a great sword together with a shield.<sup>252</sup> It was probably after the death of Dombai that Michael joined duke Lawrence and became his castellan of Racsá for several years.<sup>253</sup> In 1513 he was already dead.<sup>254</sup>

Michael married the widow of John Vitéz of Kamarca, whose family is unknown to us, and acquired with her hands portions in the Kamarcai lands.<sup>255</sup> He also obtained some of the Tulbert lands in Körös and Verőce,<sup>256</sup> presumably through the marriage of his son. Nicholas Kerhen married the daughter of another *egregius*, Nicholas Tulbertfi, and with the hands of Ursula Tulbert he not only came into possession of the castle of Berstyanóc, but also of the third part of all the estates of his father-in-law. The rest of them passed upon the husbands of Sophie and Catherine Tulbert, Nicholas Kasztellánfi and Francis Pető of Gerse respectively.<sup>257</sup> Together first with his father, and then with his uncle, Peter Kerhen, he also tried to secure for himself the Gorbonoki heritage after the death of Stephen Gorbonoki, but to no avail.<sup>258</sup> Although Nicholas is not known to have held any office either in Slavonia or outside, he evidently inherited the social position of his father: he was constantly titled *egregius*, and such a lord as Benedict Batthyány, castellan of Buda, called him his friend.<sup>259</sup> He also remained in contact with the court, as two royal letters of protection issued in his favour in 1518 show.<sup>260</sup> He died before 1520, certainly leaving several children,<sup>261</sup> among whom a son, Caspar, and two daughters can be identified.<sup>262</sup>

As we have seen, Michael Kerhen had two brothers, Peter and Valentine. Valentine Kerhen had served ban Ladislas Egervári at the time when the latter had possessed the castle of Kemlék.<sup>263</sup> As for Peter, we have no information about his activities (he is once listed among the representatives of the Slavonian nobility in 1478), which is in sharp contrast with what is known about Michael.

252 Borsa, *Balassa család levéltára*, no. 471.

253 MNL OL, DL 101 393 (1504); DL 101 438 (1511).

254 MNL OL, DL 33 908.

255 MNL OL, DL 86 434. His portion at Kernyn is mentioned in 1512: DF 274 915.

256 MNL OL, DL 101 437 (Körös); DF 252 251 (Verőce).

257 MNL OL, DF 254 528. See below the chapter on the Tulbert family.

258 MNL OL, DL 33 905; Borsa, *Balassa család levéltára*, no. 510.

259 Ibid., no. 516.

260 MNL OL, DL 33 910, DL 33 911, both *in oppido Kewy*.

261 MNL OL, DL 66 039: "Prolium [...] sew orphanorum prefati quondam Nicolai Kerhen" (abstract: Borsa, *Balassa család levéltára*, no. 533).

262 MNL OL, DL 104 538.

263 MNL OL, DF 233 293: "ipse in servicio magnifici Ladislai de Egerwara bani constitutus fuisset in castro dum scilicet idem castrum Kemlek apud manus ipsius bani fuisset et ipse Valentinus Kerhen castro in eodem de voluntate ipsius bani per certa tempora permansisset."

Peter had at least a son called John, who in turn fathered a son, Francis, and a daughter, Christine.<sup>264</sup> Yet in the years before Mohács we also see a Christopher Kerhen who, unlike John, is titled *egregius*, so it would only be reasonable to regard him as the son of Nicholas and the grandson of Michael; the thing is far from evident, however.<sup>265</sup> What we do know for sure is that the widow of Nicholas Kerhen, Ursula Tulbert, married after the death of her husband John Tardafalvi, an otherwise unknown nobleman from the neighbouring county of Valkó, yet titled as *egregius*.<sup>266</sup>

### 3/c. Budor of Budrovc (Budor od Budrovca, Budor de Budrowch)

The Budor family is unique among our sample of families in that their post-1526 history has been thoroughly explored,<sup>267</sup> and their medieval past also briefly summarised.<sup>268</sup> The Budor lands, although much less extensive, lay amidst those of the Gorbonoki and the Kerhen, in the north-eastern part of the county of Körös. The family seems to have maintained the memory of its descent from the Gorbonoki well beyond the end of the middle ages,<sup>269</sup> which, however, can certainly be proved for the fourteenth century; in 1370 the grandson of Bodor of Gorbonok, the ancestor of the Budor, turns up together with Ladislav Gorbonoki, son of Beke of the *same* Gorbonok.<sup>270</sup> It should be added, moreover, that the name Budor (Bodor), evidently the root of Budrovc, together with Garab (Grab), which turns up in the Gorbonoki family, none of them very common, was used among the Tibold kindred in the thirteenth century. This certainly hints at an early marriage alliance between the descendants of ban Belus and the Tibold, which, unfortunately, leads us back to the undocumented past of the region. Yet there is one, admittedly very late, but certainly unquestionable reference to the fact that the Gorbonoki, the Kerhen and the Budor (and the Progovci, for that matter) indeed descended from a common ancestor: in 1509 Andrew Budor, when protesting before the chapter of Csázma in the name of his nephews, of Michael and Peter Kerhen, and of Blaise Progovci, called the late Stephen Gorbonoki the generational and condivisional kinsman of all of them, and thus laid claim to his inheritance.<sup>271</sup>

264 Borsá, *Balassa család levéltára*, no. 533; MNL OL, DF 277 175/119–21 ecw.

265 MNL OL, DF 277 175/503–05 ecw. He does not call Ursula Tulbert, the widow of Nicholas, his mother. He may have been born from another woman, of course.

266 MNL OL, DF 277 175/437–39 ecw.

267 Pálffy, "Budróci Budor család."

268 Buturac, "Feudalna gospostija."

269 Pálffy, "Budróci Budor család," 973.

270 Smiciklas, *Codex diplomaticus*, vol. XIV, 227: "Georgius filius Stephani filii Bodor de Gorbonuk, Ladislaus filius Stephani filii Beke de eadem."

271 MNL OL, DF 232 277: "fratris ipsorum protestancium generacionalis et condivisionalis."



The early history of the Budor family is as obscure as that of the Kerhen. Until the late fifteenth century only bits and pieces of various land transactions have come down to us, which make an even fragmentary reconstruction impossible.<sup>272</sup> The first person to command our attention is Blaise, son of Adam, who was born sometime before 1448. Like his very distant kinsman, Michael Kerhen, he also turns up first in the service of Nicholas Dombai, castellan of Atyina.<sup>273</sup> This connection was surely not accidental, moreover, for six years later we again see him together with Michael Kerhen among the *familiares* of George Forster.<sup>274</sup> It is thus no surprise that in 1482 ban Blaise Magyar took them both as his deputies to Croatia.<sup>275</sup> Although the office of Croatian viceban is the last known phase of his career, his growing local prestige manifested itself in the fact that he was twice (1478, 1490) listed among the representatives of the Slavonian nobility, and also in that he constructed a *castellum* on his portion of Budrovc.<sup>276</sup> Alongside Budrovc, he also owned parts of Temerje and Popovc, and some tenant plots at Kristallóc, which may probably be taken as an indication that he already served Balthasar Batthyány as did his nephew later.

The authority of Blaise was apparently inherited by his nephew Andrew, who was certainly literate. At first a *familiaris* of Balthasar Batthyány, ban of Jajce, in the early years of the sixteenth century he was already in the service of bishop Luke of Zagreb, referred to as *egregius magister* by the chapter of Zagreb, a sure sign of esteem. Later on he went over to the widow of George Kanizsai, whereas in the 1510s he frequently turns up as royal man, once even as a special delegate from the banal seat.<sup>277</sup> Later still, he represented archbishop Thomas Bakóc (who governed the bishopric of Zagreb),<sup>278</sup> and, before 1524, he also served duke Lawrence Újlaki for some time.<sup>279</sup> We know of no further land acquisitions, with the exception of a small portion at Bliznaľ (Bliznaľew), yet the authority of Andrew seems to have been great: he was at least occasionally titled *egregius*,<sup>280</sup> had a *castellum* of his own (or, what is more probable, possessed that of his uncle) at Budrovc,<sup>281</sup> and in a case of family dispute one of his arbitrators was viceban Balthasar Batthyány himself.<sup>282</sup> Shortly before Mohács his son, Sixtus, received a royal grant at Buda, whereas Andrew himself wanted to acquire the Egervári lands in the

272 Pálffy, "Budróci Budor család," 929.

273 MNL OL, DF 255 801.

274 MNL OL, DL 103 765.

275 MNL OL, DL 33 897.

276 MNL OL, DF 231 928 (1495): "in sortem alterius sessionis super quam dictus quondam Blasius Budor quoddam castellum edificasset."

277 Pálffy, "Budróci Budor család," 929–32; MNL OL, DF 252 232; DF 252 232; DL 37 948.

278 Pálffy, "Budróci Budor család," 932; MNL OL, DL 37 582.

279 MNL OL, DF 277 175/335–37 ecw.

280 MNL OL, DF 252 232, DF 232 277, DF 256 008.

281 MNL OL, DF 256 008, DF 232 710.

282 MNL OL, DF 219 285.



neighbourhood of the family possessions. This may probably have been the promising debut of a further rise, yet the life of the family continued among radically transformed circumstances after 1526.

#### 2.2.4. Berivojszentiváni (Sveti Ivan Berivoj, de Berivoyzenthian)

The Berivojszentiváni family descended from a castle warrior (*várjobbágy*) of Somogy called Berivoj.<sup>283</sup> Since he originally belonged to the castle of Garics, his descendants were occasionally referred to as of Garics.<sup>284</sup> The sons of Berivoj were ennobled and their lands detached from the castle by king Ladislas IV after they had taken part in the siege of Győr among the troops of ban Henry, in 1273. In the fourteenth century the family was split into three branches, each established by one of the three sons of Thomas, son of Berivoj. Only one of them, the descendants of Martin, came to some prominence, however. In the 1350s Thomas, son of Martin was accorded the *magister* title as the representative of the wife of Ladislas Töfftös.<sup>285</sup> It must have been this Thomas who provided for an annual fair on the possession of Szentiván, attested since 1353.<sup>286</sup> His nephew and namesake, Thomas Cigány became castellan of Pécs in the service of bishop John Albeni early in the fifteenth century.<sup>287</sup> It seems to have been him who erected the *castellum* on the possession of Szentiván, also referred to as Jalsovc, which is attested throughout the fifteenth century.<sup>288</sup> He died heirless, however, in the Bosnian campaign of 1415,<sup>289</sup> as did his cousin, the son of master Thomas, and some of their lands were donated by king Sigismund to members of the Grebeni and Kasztellánfi families.<sup>290</sup>

In the course of the fifteenth century only the descendants of Farkas, son of Thomas survived, and themselves were split into two branches. None of them played any role worthy of mention in the first half of the century, however. In 1418 George, son of Nicholas was exempted by the king from the obligation to do military service until his death.<sup>291</sup> In 1451 and then again in

283 Engel: *Középkori magyar genealógia*, Szentiváni. Imre Szentpéteri and Iván Borsa, eds., *Az Árpád-házi királyok okleveleinek kritikai jegyzéke* [A Critical Register of the Charters of the Kings from the Árpád Dynasty], 2 vols. (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1923–1987), no. 2393 (1273): “jobagiones castri Simigiensis.”

284 Smičiklas, *Codex diplomaticus*, vol. XII, 210.

285 Ibid., vol. XIII, 465.

286 Ibid., vol. XII, 195–96.

287 Engel, *Archontológia*, vol. I, 390.

288 MNL OL, DL 103 891 (1484): “castello Jalsowcz nuncupato in eadem possessione Beriwoyzenhiwan constructo.”

289 MNL OL, DL 100 437.

290 *Zsigmondkori Oklevéltár*, vol. IX, no. 755.

291 *Zsigmondkori Oklevéltár*, vol. VI, no. 2427.

1454 John, son of Adam was referred to as a royal man.<sup>292</sup> It was his son Michael who again rose to become an esteemed member of local noble society. He was regularly titled *egregius*, the only member of his family to receive this distinction.<sup>293</sup> He was listed among the representatives of the Slavonian nobility in January 1478, preceding members of such families as the Fáncs and the Pekri.<sup>294</sup> At the same time he exchanged his portions at Mecsenice (*Mecchenycze*) for those of Ladislás Hermanfi at Berivojszentiván.<sup>295</sup> In 1480 he was one of the arbitrators chosen by his neighbour, Ladislás Roh, and the place of the arbitration was Berivojszentiván itself.<sup>296</sup> He died before 1484, when all his lands were in the hands of his widow called Dorothy.<sup>297</sup> His son, John, who is mentioned in 1478, seems to have deceased before his father.

His kinsmen from the other branch of the family, Peter, Stanislas and George, who then claimed the portions of their deceased relative,<sup>298</sup> were always titled simply *nobilis*, and did not inherit the local respect previously enjoyed by Michael. In 1468 Peter was listed among the *familiares* of Nicholas Dombai, castellan of Atyina,<sup>299</sup> whereas in 1494 the same Peter, as it seems, was in the service of Balthasar Batthyány.<sup>300</sup> A certain Ladislás called "Taylor" (*sartor, zabo*), who was then mentioned equally as of Berivojszentiván, but was cited at his portion at Butkafölde (*Buthkafewlde*), was in the same year one of the castellans of Batthyány at Greben,<sup>301</sup> and later was appointed as castellan of Kristallóc.<sup>302</sup> In 1495 Peter and Ladislás shared all the appurtenances of Berivojszentiván.<sup>303</sup> Later George Diakói (*Diakóvölgyi*), castellan of Szentersébet (Jugovo Polje, CRO), and then of Raholca, also acquired a portion in the estate, although it is not known by what right; presumably by marriage.<sup>304</sup> In 1517 we also find a certain Demetrius possessing 11 tenant plots at Berivojszentiván, and he is surely identical with the Demetrius Szentiváni who acted as an arbitrator in a case involving Benedict Batthyány, the archbishop of Esztergom and the Bánfi family.<sup>305</sup> In 1519 Nicholas

292 MNL OL, DL 102 115, DL 106 788.

293 MNL OL, DL 102 200, DL 102 201, DL 100 942, DL 103 843.

294 The lists which enumerate the representatives of the Slavonian nobility are given in the Appendix with all the necessary archival data. Since these lists can easily be identified by the date, no further reference will be made to them in the footnotes.

295 MNL OL, DL 100 896.

296 MNL OL, DL 100 942.

297 MNL OL, DL 103 891.

298 Ibid.

299 MNL OL, DF 255 801.

300 MNL OL, DL 104 011.

301 MNL OL, DL 104 017.

302 MNL OL, DL 104 126.

303 Adamček-Kampuš, *Popisi*, 11.

304 Ibid. 99. On George Diakói see below the chapter on Balthasar Hobetić.

305 Adamček-Kampuš, *Popisi*, 99; MNL OL, DF 252 279.

Berivojszentiváni was designated royal man,<sup>306</sup> and the family is lost from sight thereafter. The Michael Szentiváni, who was one of the *szolgabírák* in the county of Körös in 1530 may have belonged to the Berivojszentiváni family.<sup>307</sup>

### 2.2.5. Bikszádi (od Bisaga, de Bykzaad)

The Bikszádi family apparently belonged to the kindred which received from king Béla IV “the land called Rakonok in the duchy of Slavonia” in 1245.<sup>308</sup> It is impossible to know, however, from where *comes* Nicholas and *comes* Thomas, whose sons were rewarded for services made in foreign embassies and their participation in the campaign against the Mongols, came to Slavonia. What seems sure is that Mikcs, son of Michael, from whom the Bikszádi family descended,<sup>309</sup> was also related, perhaps through marriage, to the Gárdonyi kindred. It was Hector, son of Ulkoszló (Vukoslav) who bought in 1328 the land of Bikszád in the vicinity of his own estate, and gave it to Mikcs, with reference to their kinship, three years later.<sup>310</sup> We know nothing about this Mikcs, and not considerably more about his son, Emeric. Once he was referred to as a master,<sup>311</sup> and his local prestige is indeed borne out by the fact that in 1398 he was one of the arbitrators elected by count Stephen of Blagaj in his dispute with Paul of Zrin.<sup>312</sup> We do not know whom he married, but the husband of his sister was Andrew Vratnai, whose father was castellan of Nagykemlék,<sup>313</sup> and who bequeathed his lands to his brother-in-law.<sup>314</sup>

Emeric had two sons, George and Nicholas. While the latter merely turns up in an arbitration in 1412,<sup>315</sup> George became a knight in the court of king Sigismund.<sup>316</sup> His service there may have been continuous, for in 1429 at Győr he received, together with his brother Nicholas, and their distant kinsmen of Rakonok, the right of high justice (*jus gladii*) from Sigismund for their estates in Körös and Zagreb counties, and somewhat later at Pozsony they were all confirmed in their ancient properties by receiving the royal right in them.<sup>317</sup>

306 MNL OL, DL 101 531.

307 Ferdo Šišić ed., *Acta comitialia regni Croatiae, Dalmatiae et Slavoniae*, vol. I (1526–1536), vol. II (1537–1556) (Zagreb: Ex officina societatis typographicae, 1912–1915), vol. I, 267.

308 Szentpéteri–Borsa, *Árpád-házi királyok*, no. 823; *Anjou-kori Oklevéltár*, vol. XV, 201.

309 Engel, *Középkori magyar genealógia*, Bikszádi.

310 *Anjou-kori Oklevéltár*, vol. XII, 435; *ibid.*, vol. XV, 201.

311 Smičiklas, *Codex diplomaticus*, vol. XVII, 188.

312 *Zsigmondkori Oklevéltár*, vol. I, no. 5305.

313 Engel, *Archontológia*, vol. II, 260.

314 Smičiklas, *Codex diplomaticus*, vol. XIV, 414.

315 *Zsigmondkori Oklevéltár*, vol. III, no. 2800.

316 *Ibid.*, vol. VI, no. 1903.

317 MNL OL, DF 231 112, DF 231 102. The former charter refers to their services “in nonnullis nostris et regnorum nostrorum arduis agendis et validis expeditionibus.”

George seems to have joined Matko Tallóci as soon as he arrived to Slavonia as governor of the see of Zagreb,<sup>318</sup> and became his ispán of Zagreb after his appointment as ban of Slavonia. In 1439 both George and Nicholas were listed among the leading Slavonian nobility at Körös, and George apparently took sides with the Tallóci brothers after the civil war had broken out in 1440.<sup>319</sup> Yet the family seems to have suffered no losses as a result, and, moreover, in the autumn of 1445 George became one of the Slavonian vicebans of count Ulrich of Cilli, the chief opponent of his previous lord.<sup>320</sup> It is even more interesting that in August 1446 George was present in the court of John Hunyadi, then still in open conflict with count Ulrich, and upon the request of George and his kinsmen, the governor confirmed the charter of king Béla IV about the donation of Rakonok.<sup>321</sup> Shortly thereafter one of his sons, whose name is unknown to us, died at the siege of the Bosnian castle of Dubočac, in the army of ban John Székely, and the charter of John Hunyadi which mentions this fact also refers to certain misdeeds which George had committed in all probability as a *familiaris* of count Ulrich.<sup>322</sup> In August 1447 George acted, together with the ispán of Zagreb and other leading nobility of that county, as arbitrator between the chapter of Zagreb and the local castle nobility.<sup>323</sup>

The surviving son of George, Peter, proved to be the last male member of his kin. In February 1457 he was one of the envoys of the nobility of the county of Zagreb to king Ladislas V,<sup>324</sup> whereas in 1466 he figured among the representatives of the Slavonian nobility who negotiated with bishop Oswald of Zagreb.<sup>325</sup> A year later we find him, together with other leading Slavonian noblemen, among those who insulted the participants at the synod of Zagreb.<sup>326</sup> In 1469 we meet him as an arbitrator,<sup>327</sup> whereas two years later he was listed as third among the representatives of the Slavonian nobility. In the summer of 1472 he was captivated at Zagreb upon orders by bishop Oswald by the leaders of his troops, presumably in connection with some dispute about Rakonok, which had been donated to the Tuz family by king Matthias.<sup>328</sup>

318 Andrija Lukinović, ed., *Povijesni spomenici Zagrebačke biskupije* [Historical Documents of the Bishopric of Zagreb], vol. V (1395–1420), vol. VI (1421–1440), vol. VII (1441–1465) (Zagreb: Kršćanska Sadašnjost–Hrvatski Državni Arhiv, 1994–2004), vol. VI, 460–62.

319 In January 1441 he seals the charter in which the Dombai brothers swear to help Herman Grebeni, a leading supporter of ban Matko Tallóci: MNL OL, DL 102 091.

320 And not of Frank Tallóci, as maintained by Engel, *Archontológia*, vol. I, 21.

321 MNL OL, DF 231 223.

322 MNL OL, DF 231 225: “non obstantibus quibuscumque excessibus suis in quibus hactenus repertus fuisset.”

323 Lukinović, *Povijesni spomenici*, vol. VII, 106.

324 MNL OL, DF 218 846.

325 DF 252 046.

326 Tkalčić, *Monumenta*, vol. II, 310–12. On the background of the incident see Pálosfalvi, “Grebeni Hermanfi,” II, 293–94.

327 MNL OL, DL 16 793.

328 Tkalčić, *Monumenta*, vol. II, 348–50.

He was soon released, however, and in 1473 we again see him as participating to an arbitration.<sup>329</sup> A year later he was once more listed among those Slavonian nobles who negotiated with bishop Oswald,<sup>330</sup> and was even elected as one of the envoys then sent to the king.<sup>331</sup> Late in 1476 he was one of the royal men sent for the introduction of Nicholas Bánfi into the estate of Orbona,<sup>332</sup> and less than a year later he was again dispatched to the king as an envoy by the Slavonian nobility.<sup>333</sup> At that time he was at the height of his local influence; indeed, he seemed influential enough for the Rohfi of Déce to entrust one of their possessions into his protection.<sup>334</sup> In 1478 he was again enumerated among the leading Slavonian nobility, although this time his name was for some reason relegated to the lower region of the list. He died soon afterwards, before January 1479.<sup>335</sup>

The wife of Peter apparently belonged to the Grebeni family,<sup>336</sup> but it is sure that he had no surviving male heir.<sup>337</sup> It was not, however, the family of his wife, but that of his sister that he preferred to favour. Anne Bikszádi had married Nicholas Kasztellánfi, and bore to him a son called George. It was to this George that Peter Bikszádi bequeathed his estates, together with the *castellum* erected at Bikszád.<sup>338</sup> Although in the 1480s Ladislás Hermanfi of Greben tried to reclaim them with reference to the act of 1331, it was to no avail,<sup>339</sup> and Bikszád remained in the possession of George Kasztellánfi, who was sometimes even called of his newly obtained estate.<sup>340</sup>

### 2.2.5. Bocskai of Raszinyakeresztúr (Bočkaj od Rasinje, Bochkay de Razynakerezthwr)

The Gutkeled kindred established themselves in Slavonia in the middle of the thirteenth century. Apay I was ban of Slavonia in 1237–39, and was followed in this office by his brother Nicholas in 1240.<sup>341</sup> Whereas the descendants of Apay remained in the northern part of the county of Körös, on the possession of Raszinyakeresztúr after which the family was named later, the offspring of

329 MNL OL, DL 103 746.

330 MNL OL, DF 252 060.

331 Kukuljević, *Jura regni*, part II, 211–12.

332 MNL OL, DL 33 429.

333 Kukuljević, *Jura regni*, part II, 208–09.

334 MNL OL, DL 107 041.

335 Ibid.

336 Dorothy Grebeni, who was a nun in the Franciscan cloister at Óbuda, called in a letter the widow of Peter Bikszádi her sister: MNL OL, DL 45 768.

337 In 1484 she was already the wife of John of Pezerio: MNL OL, DF 255 878.

338 MNL OL, DL 102 197.

339 MNL OL, DL 101 029.

340 See below the chapter on the Kasztellánfi family.

341 On the early history of the family see Karácsonyi, *Magyar nemzetségek*, 509–10.

Nicholas returned to north-eastern Hungary, the original “settlement region” of the Gutkeled kindred. Thus, until the 1330s they are only referred to in matters concerning the counties of Zemplén and Szabolcs.<sup>342</sup> After the extinction of the Apay-branch the descendants of ban Nicholas, and those of his brother, Csépán, inherited the Slavonian estates, and divided them among themselves in 1379. The sons of Nicholas Bocskai, Stephen, Peter and John received the possessions west of the Danube, namely the estate of Apajkeresztúr (Raszinyakeresztúr) with the castle then called Kozmadamján and its other appurtenances.<sup>343</sup> It was from the three sons of Nicholas that the three branches of the Bocskai family, which played an important role in the history of Slavonia, descended.

Among the three branches the descendants of Stephen were the less prominent. Stephen himself was ispán (alispán) of Stephen Lackfi in the county of Varasd,<sup>344</sup> but no other office is known to have been held by him. It is certain, however, that neither the fall of Lackfi nor the revolts against king Sigismund affected the family, for one of the sons of Stephen, George, is continuously referred to as a member of the court between 1398 and 1405.<sup>345</sup> In August 1405 he was present as a knight of the court at the introduction of count Herman of Cilli into the estate of Szamobor (Samobor, CRO).<sup>346</sup> He is consequently completely lost from sight, however, although he was still alive as late as 1447.<sup>347</sup> His brother, Apay son of Stephen is even more of a dim figure, the only certainty about him being his wife, Apollonia de Surdis, the daughter of Nicholas, nephew of John, archbishop of Esztergom.<sup>348</sup>

The son of Apay, Stephen Apay was for a brief period alispán of Baranya, presumably as a *familiaris* of Ladislás Garai.<sup>349</sup> The son of George, “little” Ladislás<sup>350</sup> apparently held no office at all: in 1439 he is listed among the leading Slavonian nobility, and in 1452 he is one of the arbitrators in the case between the pretenders for the important estate of Ludbreg,<sup>351</sup> otherwise his

342 Ibid., 510–11.

343 MNL OL, DL 96 795. On the relationship between the different branches of the Gutkeled kindred see Engel, *Középkori magyar genealógia*, Gutkeled nem, sárvármonostori ág, 1. tábla.

344 Engel, *Archontológia*, vol. I, 224.

345 Ibid., 492.

346 MNL OL, DF 255 586.

347 MNL OL, DF 261 833.

348 Engel, *Középkori magyar genealógia*, Lipoveci (de Surdis). The other daughter of Nicholas married Benedict Himfi junior. The mother of the two daughters was Anne Hahóti, which accounts for the fact that in 1444 Demetrius Himfi (son of Benedict) and Stephen Apay (son of Apay) are recorded as possessing at Hahót and other villages in the county of Zala: MNL OL, DL 45 440.

349 Engel, *Archontológia*, vol. I, 105. (His fellow in the office, his kinsman Stephen Bocskai, son of Peter, is known to have been a *familiaris* of palatine Nicholas Garai in 1419: *Zsigmondkori Oklevéltár*, vol. VII, no. 1010.)

350 MNL OL, DL 94 233 (1468): “Nicolaum filium quondam alterius Ladislai parvi de eadem Razynyakerezhthwr.”

351 MNL OL, DL 101 749.



life is shrouded in obscurity. He married from the Csornai family, of the Oslí kindred, based in the counties of Sopron and Vas.<sup>352</sup> Stephen Apay had one son, Oswald, and three daughters, Catherine, Rusinta and Helen. Oswald seems to have lost his parents at a young age, for in 1457 it was with reference to the damages suffered as an orphan (*in tenera nostre orphanitatis etate*) that he granted the same privileges to his tenants of Szentkozmadamján which had thus far been enjoyed by those of Ladislás son of John on the same estate.<sup>353</sup> Oswald died heirless soon thereafter, but mortgaged before his house (*curia*) in the *civitas* of Raszinya together with its appurtenances for 800 florins to a noble family from the county of Vas, the Szölcei, from whom they later descended on the Darabos of Nádasd from the same county.<sup>354</sup> Thanks to a rare coincidence, we know the husbands of all three sisters of Oswald: Catherine was married to Gregory Török of Keményfalva, Rusinta to Anthony Sitkei of the Ják kindred, and Helen to Blaise Zicsi.<sup>355</sup>

Ladislás, son of George had two sons from his wife called Catherine: Stephen and Nicholas the elder.<sup>356</sup> Apart from one single mention Stephen does not occur in the sources; he seems to have died young. Nicholas the elder, on the other hand, only died sometime after 1495,<sup>357</sup> but is the same difficult to grasp. Their financial situation could not be very promising, for in 1467 Catherine was unable to repay six florins to Wolfgang Frodnacher that she had previously borrowed for her needs, and was consequently forced to mortgage two plots to John Bocskai in return for his help.<sup>358</sup> Nicholas the elder married twice from the same family, the Pogány of Cseb from the county of Zala, owners of the neighbouring estate of Herbortya. His first wife was the daughter of Emeric Pogány, Catherine, who bore him a son, Blaise; he joined the Franciscan order in 1500.<sup>359</sup> Secondly Nicholas married Barbara, sister of Peter Pogány, from whom he had two daughters, Dorothy and Catherine.<sup>360</sup>

352 MNL OL, DL 104 119. In this charter Nicholas Bocskai is said to be the daughter of Catherine Csornai, and, since his daughter is called Dorothy, it is evident that he is identical with Nicholas senior.

353 MNL OL, DF 218 847.

354 MNL OL, DL 35 991. The Szölcei and the Nádasdi Darabos had concluded a treaty of mutual inheritance in 1431: Csánki, *Történelmi földrajz*, vol. II, 852. The widow of Stephen Apay, called Helen, and mother of Oswald, later married Ladislás Darabos of Nádasd: MNL OL, DL 94 202.

355 In 1484 the daughters were suing their cousin, Nicholas son of Ladislás before the ban, but the only extant document of the process is a prorogation: MNL OL, DF 219 005.

356 MNL OL, DF 277 030: "Nicolai Bochkay senioris de Razynyakerezthwur."

357 He is still registered as alive by the tax list of 1495: Adamček–Kampuš, *Popisi*, 13.

358 MNL OL, DF 262 149.

359 MNL OL, DL 59 768: "Nicolaus de Bochka [...] in persona nobilis domine Katherine consortis sue filie [...] condam Emerici Pogan de Cheb;" MNL OL, DF 276 912.

360 Ibid. In fact, the sister of Peter Pogány is once called Dorothy and is said to be the wife of Francis Kecser (MNL OL, DL 22 548). Pál Engel accepted the testimony of this charter and reconstructed accordingly the genealogy of the Pogány family (Engel, *Középkori magyar genealógia*, Pogány (csébi, enyerei). Yet we know from other sources that the wife of Francis



Dorothy in her turn married Francis Kecer who thus acquired the portions of Nicholas in the Bocskai estates.<sup>361</sup>

The absence of Nicholas the elder from our sources seems to be explained by his removal from Slavonia altogether: his possessions had for some reason been mortgaged to people unknown to us and later redeemed by his brother-in-law, Peter Pogány at his own expenses.<sup>362</sup>

The descendants of John, son of Nicholas are much easier to follow in our sources. Nicholas, son of John most probably entered the court of king Sigismund, where he met Pipo Ozorai (Filippo Scolari) and became his lifelong *familiaris*. In 1413 he fought in the Friuli campaign, then served Pipo as his alispán of Arad county (1417–1425). In 1424 he followed Pipo for his campaign to Szörény (Turnu Severin, RO), and in 1426 to Wallachia.<sup>363</sup> After the death of Pipo he seems again to have entered the royal court and remained there until his death.<sup>364</sup> He jointly held the estate of Kristallóc *pro honore* in 1427.<sup>365</sup> Late in 1426 he accompanied the king to Transylvania,<sup>366</sup> and in the autumn of 1427 he was among the leaders of the royal troops sent to Serbia.<sup>367</sup> His faithful services there did not remain unpaid, and he also contracted a treaty of mutual inheritance with another nobleman of Körös county, Peter Toka of Kopacsovc (Kopačevac, CRO).<sup>368</sup> He was also able to secure a canonry for his brother, Stephen, although the latter may never have definitively entered the clergy.<sup>369</sup>

Nicholas married Martha Gorbonoki,<sup>370</sup> who bore him a son, Ladislás and a girl, Margaret. Yet Martha also had from her previous husband, Thomas

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Kecer was in reality the daughter of Nicholas Bocskai, called Dorothy (eg. MNL OL, DF 276 907), whose mother was indeed the sister of Peter Pogány. We have no reason to doubt the assertion of Blaise Bocskai, who is reasonably supposed to have had exact information about the mother of his half-sisters. To make things more complicated, however, it is worth remarking that Peter Pogány had in fact two sisters, one called Catherine, and the other Barbara, each of whom had a daughter called Dorothy: MNL OL, DF 276 898.

361 MNL OL, DL 22 548.

362 MNL OL, DF 276 912.

363 Pál Engel, "Ozorai Pipo" [Pipo of Ozora], in idem, *Honor, vár, ispánság*, 272 and n. 154. The 1424 campaign: *Zsigmondkori Oklevéltár*, vol. XI, no. 1354.

364 Engel, *Archontológia*, vol. I, 504.

365 Ibid., no. 354.

366 MNL OL, DL 94 161.

367 MNL OL, DL 94 167.

368 MNL OL, DL 94 163.

369 Engel, "Ozorai Pipo," 295, n. 154. There is no trace of him thereafter.

370 MNL OL, DF 231 687: "dominam Martham consortem Nicolai de Bochka filiam scilicet quondam Stephani filii Beke de Gorbonok." In fact, the widow of Thomas Veres is once referred to as Martha, daughter of *Egidii parvi de Mochola*, who, apparently, cannot be identical with Martha Gorbonoki. MNL OL, DL 94 179. But in 1404 we meet *Egidius parvus* of Gorbonok (DL 8901), which makes it obvious that the two persons were in fact the same. How the Gorbonoki came to possess in the county of Somogy has yet to be cleared.

Veres of Büssü, two sons, John and Vitus, and a girl, Veronica.<sup>371</sup> These children were brought up by their stepfather, Nicholas, and later also bore the name Bocskai. Thus the estate of Büssü and its several appurtenances in the counties of Somogy and Tolna came into the possession of Nicholas and his heirs.<sup>372</sup> Vitus entered the church and became first canon and then provost of the chapter of Zagreb.<sup>373</sup> His sister, Veronica, married Frank Megyericsei from Körös county.<sup>374</sup>

The son of Nicholas Bocskai and Martha Gorbonoki, Ladislav, had all chances of following in his father's footsteps. He was born sometime after 1412, and nothing is known about him until the early 1440s. He surely began his career during the last years of king Sigismund, however, for when he was rewarded by Wladislaw I in January 1441, the king referred to his services done to kings Sigismund and Albert.<sup>375</sup> In the civil war which followed the death of Albert he took sides with Wladislaw Jagiello and fought in the king's Transdanubian campaign in the spring of 1441. He received the estates of Blaise Zicsi, confiscated for infidelity, and the king entrusted to him the protection of the wife of Nicholas Prodavizi, another rebel to the king.<sup>376</sup> He seems to have remained in royal service in the following years, and disappeared together with king Wladislaw in the fatal battle of Várna (Varna, BLG) in November 1444.<sup>377</sup>

The untimely death of Ladislav must have been a serious blow for his family. At first his widow, Ursula took care of the sons, John and Sigismund Apay,<sup>378</sup> then, presumably because of her death, their uncle, provost Vitus provided for them as a tutor. The situation of John and Sigismund was indeed precarious, and as early as April 1447 governor Hunyadi was asked to receive them into his special protection, especially against their own kinsman, George son of Stephen.<sup>379</sup> After coming of age, the brothers seem for some time to have lived in peace together on their portions of Raszinyakeresztúr, but later their relationship deteriorated to the point that in 1478 John was sentenced at the banal seat to (temporary) loss of all property against his own brother.<sup>380</sup> In 1464 John was engaged in the defence of the Bosnian castles, apparently in royal service, so he is reasonably supposed to have participated in the previous

371 MNL OL, DL 94 161.

372 MNL OL, DL 94 210.

373 Appointed as provost by bishop John (1428): Lukinović, *Povijesni spomenici*, vol. V, 245–46; 1466: MNL OL, DL 94 227.

374 MNL OL, DL 94 210.

375 MNL OL, DL 94 184: "primum quondam dominis Sigismundo imperatori et Alberto regibus Hungarie."

376 MNL OL, DF 262 056.

377 MNL OL, DF 261 865: "quia prefatus Ladislaus in conflictu regio pridem cum sevissimis Turcis inito periclitatus fore dinoscitur."

378 "Sigismundus aliter Apay" (MNL OL, DL 16 223).

379 MNL OL, DF 261 833.

380 MNL OL, DF 276 927.

royal campaign there.<sup>381</sup> Although none of the two brothers held any office either in Slavonia or outside thereafter, both remained esteemed members of the local noble community.<sup>382</sup> Their sister, Margaret was married to Thomas Vince of Szentgyörgy.<sup>383</sup>

Both John and Sigismund died after 1497, but only the former had surviving children. He married Anne, the daughter of Nicholas Kasztellánfi.<sup>384</sup> Among his four sons, Nicholas the younger, Peter, John and Thomas, only Nicholas seems to have come to adulthood, for the other three disappear from our sources after 1475.<sup>385</sup> Nicholas the younger at first entered the *familia* of the neighbouring magnate family, the Ernuszt of Csáktornya, and helped them in the period of anarchy following the death of king Mathias in occupying the castle of Tapalóc (Topolovac) from the Dersfi family.<sup>386</sup> After the fall of bishop Sigismund of Pécs in 1496<sup>387</sup> Nicholas shifted his allegiance and joined duke John Corvin. In November 1497 he was mobilised among the other *familiares* of the duke,<sup>388</sup> and this event seems to be in connection with the fact that at the same time Nicholas the younger mortgaged his portions at Raszinyakeresztúr to his own father for 100 florins.<sup>389</sup> In 1506 he was already dead: at that time his son, Stephen and his daughter, Catherine received from king Wladislaw the royal right in all the possessions of their late father.<sup>390</sup> Stephen occurs frequently in the sources,<sup>391</sup> but nothing is known about his eventual functions or services; we see him for the last time in the summer of 1524, when together with Louis Pekri and Paul Čavlović he donates a half plot to the rector of the St Wolfgang chapel by the church of Szentlélek.<sup>392</sup> We know of no children born to him and his wife, Barbara, but it is almost certain

381 MNL OL, DF 261 835: "in defensione seu tuicione castrorum nostrorum in regno Bozne habitorum."

382 They were constantly accorded the *egregius* title by all local institutions. Before 1468, however, John was excommunicated upon the request of the nuns of the Island of Rabbits for having devastated one of their villages in the county of Somogy: MNL OL, DF 261 838.

383 MNL OL, DL 94 227.

384 Maček-Jurković, *Rodoslov plemića*, 148.

385 MNL OL, DL 94 262.

386 Miklós Komjáthy, "A somogyi konvent II. Ulászló-kori oklevelei az országos levéltárban. 1. közlemény" [The Charters of the Convent of Somogy from the Reign of Wladislaw II in the Hungarian National Archives. First part], in *Somogy megye múltjából (Levéltári évkönyv)* 4, ed. József Kanyar (Kaposvár: Somogy Megyei Levéltár, 1973), no. 8; MNL OL, DF 261 842.

387 Royal treasurer from 1494, in 1496 he was accused of embezzlement and arrested. Although he was eventually allowed to redeem himself for the enormous sum of 400,000 florins, his political career was cut short. See Soós, *Magyarország kincstartói*, 50–51.

388 MNL OL, DF 261 957.

389 MNL OL, DL 94 293.

390 MNL OL, DL 94 307.

391 In 1514, for instance, he goes together with his wife Barbara to the church of Mary Magdalene at Csázma "*causa solvendi voti ipsorum*" (MNL OL, DF 262 396).

392 MNL OL, DF 261 910. He had obtained a portion of the estate of Szentlélek by the right of his descent from Peter Kasztellánfi on the female line: DF 232 597.

that the Francis Bocskai who possessed portions of Raszinyakeresztúr in the 1540s,<sup>393</sup> was the enemy of bishop Simon of Zagreb in 1539,<sup>394</sup> and served as a cavalry captain under Nicholas of Zrin,<sup>395</sup> was his son.

John Bocskai also had two daughters, Helen (Ilka) and Hedvig,<sup>396</sup> and the latter became the wife of Nicholas Batthyány. From this marriage were born two daughters, Sophie and Justine, who later married John Gyulai and Paul Čavlović respectively.<sup>397</sup> As for Helen, she can in all probability be identified as the Helen Bocskai who was head of the cloister on the Island of Rabbits in the 1520s.<sup>398</sup>

It was from Peter, son of Nicholas that the most outstanding member of the whole family, Peter Bocskai descended. His grandfather, Stephen was a *familiaris* of palatine Nicholas Garai and his alispán of Baranya.<sup>399</sup> Nothing is known about the activities of his son, Ladislás, either in magnate service or in the royal court, but he surely contracted a very advantageous marriage. His wife was Margaret Csire of Álmosd, from the Ákos kindred, whose kinsmen played an important role in the queen's court.<sup>400</sup> In the troublesome years following the death of emperor Sigismund it was from the dower of Margaret that Ladislás Bocskai spent as much as five thousand florins upon the defence of the family's common castle, Apajvára, as well as of his own *castellum* of Kéthely (Kedhely, Koledinec, CRO) and the possessions pertaining to it. In return he was obliged to pledge all his acquired estates to his wife, with the stipulation that in the case of his dying before Margaret she would have to care for the upbringing and education of their son, Peter.<sup>401</sup>

Accordingly, Peter was born sometime before 1450, possibly around 1440. The beginnings of his early career are impossible to reconstruct; it is nevertheless revealing that when we first see him after 1450 it is as an elected arbitrator at Buda in the company of John Geszti, viceban of Slavonia, Ladislás Egervári, future ban, and another important nobleman from Körös, Akacius Kasztellánfi.<sup>402</sup> Shortly after the arrival of ban John Ernuszt to Slavonia he was appointed as his ispán of Zagreb, and a year later, between 24 June and 7 July he also replaced Ladislás Hermanfi as one of the vicebans.<sup>403</sup> What happened

393 Adamček–Kampuš, *Popisi*, 137.

394 Laszowski, *Monumenta Habsburgica*, vol. II, 425.

395 Pálffy, "Budróci Budor család," 940.

396 MNL OL, DL 94 262.

397 MNL OL, DL 49 544.

398 Attila Hegedűs and Lajos Papp, eds., *Középkori leveleink (1541-ig)* [Hungarian Medieval Letters until 1541] (Budapest: Tankönyvkiadó, 1991), 137–38.

399 In 1438 we find him in the service of ban Ladislás Garai (Tkalčić, *Monumenta*, vol. II, 153). Alispán of Baranya: Engel, *Archontológia*, vol. I, 105.

400 Ibid., vol. II, 52–53.

401 MNL OL, DL 33 353.

402 MNL OL, DL 17 355.

403 All archontological data with regard to the bans and vicebans of Slavonia are taken from the table which is published in the appendix of the present book.

after the death of his lord, however, was to remain unparalleled in the history of medieval Slavonia. At first king Matthias left the two vicebans, Peter Bocskai and Nicholas Pozsegai in office as “delegated judges with the full authority and power of the same banship”.<sup>404</sup> Then, apparently still unable to find a successor to Ernuszt, the king accorded to Bocskai the banal title with the evident aim of removing him from office as soon as the right person was chosen. During July and August 1476 Bocskai exerted almost unlimited banal authority: the octaval courts were held in his name, he directed orders of introduction to the local chapters, and was accordingly titled *magnificus*.<sup>405</sup> Yet he did not appoint a viceban, and did not have an authentic banal seal either. Immediately after the news of the appointment in the last days of August 1476 of Ladislás Egervári as ban of Dalmatia, Croatia and Slavonia arrived to Slavonia, following a brief period of hesitation Peter Bocskai assumed the direction of affairs as the new ban’s deputy,<sup>406</sup> and left his office only sometime after 15 October, when Egervári finally appointed two vicebans of his own choice.

But the leave of Bocskai by no means meant that he had lost Egervári’s favour. On the one hand, he seems to have remained in office as ispán of Zagreb even after his removal from the office of viceban. On the other hand, he returned as Egervári’s deputy before 18 September 1479, taking the place of Ladislás Szencsei. Again, the reasons of the change are unknown to us; it is nevertheless certain that Szencsei did not die, for he later reappeared as one of the vicebans of Blaise Magyar, in the company precisely of Peter Bocskai. The latter remained in office during the banate of Matthias Geréb, moreover, and only left together with his lord sometime after 26 October 1489, when Egervári took over again the government of Slavonia. Between 1479 and 1489 Bocskai thus spent more than ten years without interruption in the office of viceban under three different bans, by far the longest term of office-holding in the history of late medieval Slavonia. It is equally important to remark that it was during his service that the ispánate of Zagreb was definitively united with that of Körös and the vicebanship; after (1484) the viceban(s) was (were) always simultaneously ispán(s) of Körös and Zagreb.

404 “Petrus Bochkay de Razynakerezthur et Nicolaus Posegay de Garygnicza alias vicebani et comites comitatus Crisiensis necnon vacante honore banatus regni Sclavonie per regiam serenitatem loco legitimorum banorum cum plena auctoritate et potestate ipsius banatus iudices deputati:” János Karácsonyi, “Oklevélkivonatok a szentmiklósi és óvári gróf Pongrácz család levéltárából” [Abstracts from the Archives of the Pongrácz Family, Counts of Szentmiklós and Óvár], *Történelmi Tár*, 1. sor., 19 (1896): 524.

405 Eg. MNL OL, DL 102 190, DL 94 527, DF 231 661, DF 231 667. The anomaly of the situation was nevertheless clearly perceived by the local authorities, for the chapter of Zagreb for instance directed its report on 22 July 1476 in general to *magnifico domino regni Sclavonie bano*, as if hesitating whether Bocskai merited the title. DL 107 028.

406 15 August 1476: the new ban confirms his charter “sigillo prefati Petri Bochkay de Razynakerezthur vices nostras gerentis” (MNL OL, DL 17 875).

The authority of Peter Bocskai within the Slavonian nobility grew parallel to his long activity as viceban. In 1478 he was still listed fourth among the representatives of the Slavonian nobility, in January 1490 he was second behind deputy-palatine Ladislav Hermanfi. In the meantime he was one of the elected nobles who worked out a compromise with bishop Oswald of Zagreb in the matter of tithe-paying,<sup>407</sup> and a year later, in 1486 he defended the interests of his Slavonian fellow nobles at Buda.<sup>408</sup> In 1489 he acted as tax collector of Slavonia, and his work there was cut short by the death of king Matthias.<sup>409</sup> He returned again to the capital as one of the representatives of the Slavonian nobility during the summer of 1490.<sup>410</sup> It may have been the jealousy aroused by his local authority and his land acquisitions, to be discussed later, which led to his being accused before Wladislaw II in 1491 of having joined, together with Balthasar Batthyány and Peter Gudovci, Maximilian of Habsburg, and taken part in the occupation of the castles belonging to the bishopric of Zagreb. They finally managed to clear themselves of the accusations brought against them,<sup>411</sup> and the subsequent royal donations made in favour of Peter Bocskai prove that he continued to benefit from the king's favour until his death. In 1492 he was tax collector of Slavonia again in the company of Balthasar Batthyány,<sup>412</sup> and in the same year he was second only to the same Balthasar among the Slavonian nobles who confirmed the Habsburg succession at Buda.<sup>413</sup> A year later he occupied the possessions of Stephen Csopor, presumably in the service of the royal commissioner, Andrew Both of Bajna.<sup>414</sup> In 1495 he acted as one of duke Corvin deputies in the county of Varasd.<sup>415</sup> In November of the same year he was again in the king's camp at Bács (Bač, SRB), and profited from his presence to obtain a royal confirmation of his possessions for himself and his daughters.<sup>416</sup> Still in 1495 he received, together with Peter Gudovci, 200 florins "for the compromise they had made with the nobility [of Slavonia] so that they would raise no obstacles in the

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407 MNL OL, DF 268 111.

408 MNL OL, DF 268 110.

409 MNL OL, DL 19 674.

410 MNL OL, DF 252 107.

411 MNL OL, DL 19 718. Edited in Ferdo Šišić ed., *Rukovet spomenika o hercegu Ivanišu Korvinu i o borbama Hrvata s Turcima (1473–1496) s dodatkom (1491–1498)* [A Handful of Sources on Duke John Corvin and the Struggle of the Croatians with the Turks (1473–1496), with Additions (1491–1498)] (Zagreb: n.p., 1936), 318.

412 Ibid., 337–38.

413 See also MNL OL, DL 38 645.

414 MNL OL, DL 35 732: "Egregius Petrus Bochkay de Razinya occupator et capitaneus castris Zarwaskew vocati et possessionum de Monozlo," abstract published by Elemér Mályusz in *Leváltári Közlemények* 13 (1935): 257.

415 MNL OL, A 57: Magyar Kancelláriai Levéltár, Libri regii 2, 477–78.

416 Jakov Stipišić and Miljen Šamšalović, eds., "Isprave u Arhivu Jugoslavenske Akademije," [Charters in the Archives of the Yugoslav Academy], *Zbornik Historijskog instituta JAZU* 2 (1959), 3 (1960), 4 (1961) and 5 (1963) (continuous numbering), no. 3332.



matter of the royal taxation."<sup>417</sup> His involvement in the tax collection may again have caused difficulties for him, for late in 1496, when the dismissed treasurer Sigismund Ernuszt was called to Buda under a letter of safeguard, he also went to the capital, entrusting the protection of his possessions and family to his kinsman, Sigismund Bocskai.<sup>418</sup> He finally suffered no harm, however, and at the end of his life he even returned to the government of Slavonia as one of the vicebans of duke John Corvin.

In the course of his long career Peter Bocskai considerably enlarged his landed wealth. In 1484 he took into pledge the portions of Ladislas Szencsei in the castle of Szombathely (Subocki grad) and its appurtenances,<sup>419</sup> and despite the enormous sum of 3000 florins the affair was surely not fictitious.<sup>420</sup> He also bought some possessions in the county of Varasd and provided for a royal confirmation of them.<sup>421</sup> Yet by far the most important acquisition was the estate of Kustyerolc with the *castellum* there, which Peter purchased in 1492.<sup>422</sup> It was apparently also him who had definitively transformed Szentlőrinc (Gostović, CRO) into an independent estate by erecting there a *castellum* before 1481.<sup>423</sup> He was, at least for some time, burgher (*civis*) of the free royal town of Zagreb, and owned a "palace" (*pallacium*) there.<sup>424</sup>

Peter Bocskai died early in 1502. From his marriage with Margaret Kasztellánfi<sup>425</sup> he had three daughters: Martha, Elisabeth and Potenciana. Martha married first a certain George Čemerović (Chemeroich, Chemerowych), the identity of whose is impossible to establish.<sup>426</sup> Her second husband was Francis Szencsei, to whom she bore a son, Wolfgang (Farkas).<sup>427</sup> Elizabeth was married to Louis Pekri, who thus established himself in Raszinya and its appurtenances.<sup>428</sup> The third daughter, Potenciana was betrothed with Stephen,

417 Thallóczy-Horváth, *Jajcza*, 120: "Egregiis Petro Gwdowchy et altero Petro Bochkay propter compositionem quam fecerant cum regnicolis, ut nullum contrarium in facto taxe regie maiestati tenerent, ex commissione regie maiestatis simul cum bonis ipsorum in regno Sclavonie dati fl. Ilc."

418 MNL OL, DF 262 302: "omnia tam castellum tam possessiones cum familia v. e. in protectionem commendamus tamquam vestra propria."

419 MNL OL, DF 255 882.

420 His tenants at Szencse are mentioned: MNL OL, DF 255 877.

421 MNL OL, DL 101 136.

422 Kubinyi, "Ernuszt Zsigmond," 330; MNL OL, DF 231 846.

423 His castellan there is mentioned in 1481: MNL OL, DL 37 582.

424 Tkalčić, *Monumenta*, vol. XI, 71–72.

425 Daughter of Nicholas Kasztellánfi and Helen (Ilka) Grebeni: MNL OL, DL 101 278.

426 In a banal charter issued in May 1502, the name of one of the vicebans, namely that of Bernard Turóci, was crossed, and the name of George Chemerowych of Raszinya written above (MNL OL, DF 255 959). This would mean that he had taken the place of his father-in-law as the deputy of duke Corvin, but this is our only piece of information on him as viceban. In 1493 George Chemerowych and Nicholas Bocskai are referred to together as *familiares* of the Ernuszt family (DL 19 772).

427 MNL OL, DL 94 317.

428 MNL OL, DF 276 909.



son of Peter Gudovci.<sup>429</sup> It cannot be decided, however, whether it was from Potenciana or from his second marriage that the daughter of Stephen Gudovci called Elizabeth was born, who later married John Pekri.

I was unable to connect to any of the known branches of the Bocskai family a certain John Bocskai, who turns up in 1522 as castellan of Lóbor.<sup>430</sup> Indeed, it is remarkable that he did not even have portions at Raszinya, only some tenant plots in the neighbouring village of Ebres.<sup>431</sup> I did not find any trace of him in the post-1526 sources either.

## 2.2.6. Elias Bosnyák/Begojevics of Businc (Bušćinec, de Bwschyncz)

His origins are impossible to trace back with any certainty. The first time he appears in the late 1480s he is referred to as the son-in-law (*gener*) of a certain Philip Porkoláb.<sup>432</sup> In a document from 1487 both Philip and Elias are called the brothers-in-law (*sororius*) of George Bontusovci (*de Bonthwsowch*), who was the son of Andrew Bontusovci and the daughter of Nicholas Bancz of Businc.<sup>433</sup> Businc lay in the neighbourhood of Rojcsa (Rovišće, CRO),<sup>434</sup> and the Businci may originally have had some connections with the Raveni/Cirkvenai kin, but it is not known whether they had once also belonged to the castle of Körös. In any case, in 1416 we find the Businci in the company of the Raveni family who tried to obtain the estates of Ladislav Cirkvenai with reference to his heirless death in the Bosnian war.<sup>435</sup> Bontusovc, on the other hand, seems to be located in the southern part of the county, somewhere between Monoszló and Desnice.<sup>436</sup> We know nothing about the origins of Andrew Zermek of Bontusovc who married Agatha, the daughter of Nicholas Businci, and thus acquired portions in the lands of the latter; their son, George was szolgabíró of Körös county in 1507–12.<sup>437</sup>

The most probable solution to explain the relationship between this George on the one hand and Philip Porkoláb and Elias on the other is that

429 MNL OL, DF 219 077.

430 MNL OL, DL 23 629.

431 Adamček–Kampuš, *Popisi*, 94, 127.

432 MNL OL, DL 102 233: “Philippus Porkolab, Elias gener eiusdem;” Philip is once mentioned as the father-in-law (*socer*) of Elias (DF 232 101). In 1494 he is said the *germanus* of the same Philip, which should be a misspelling (DF 231 891). As late as 1498 he is still identified as the *gener* of Philip: DF 232 006.

433 MNL OL, DL 19 483.

434 Between Rojcsa and Businc the border was the river Velika (MNL OL, DL 19 483: “metas predictae possessionis Bwschyncz appellate [...] separat et distringit a metis et terris [...] Stephani Dersfy ad opidum Roycha spectantibus”).

435 *Zsigmondkori Oklevéltár*, vol. V, no. 2512.

436 At least according to the parish list of 1501 (Csánki, *Körösmegye*, 76.)

437 Adamček–Kampuš, *Popisi*, 27 (1507); MNL OL, DF 279 477 (1512). He continuously held the office in the meantime.

while Philip married the unknown sister of George, Elias in turn married a girl born from this latter marriage. Unfortunately, this hypothesis does not lead us closer to the possible origins of Philip and Elias. The name “porkoláb” was generally attached to those who had previously held a castellanship, and, indeed, Philip is attested as castellan of Zagreb in 1481.<sup>438</sup> Zagreb was a free royal city, although we do not know whether Philip was appointed directly by the king or by the ban. At first both he and Elias are referred to merely as “staying in Businc”,<sup>439</sup> and no other possession is ever attached to their name. Nevertheless, Philip seems to have been originally more influential, for already as a provisor of Jajce Elias is still identified as a *gener* of Philip. Further traces lead us towards Jakószerdahely and Miletinc (Miletinec, CRO), where in 1513 the widows of Elias Bosnyák and George Bontusovci possessed jointly with Philip.<sup>440</sup>

As regards Elias, from 1494 he is generally called the Bosnian (*Bosnyak*), and sometimes also referred to as “Begoyewych”,<sup>441</sup> which clearly hints at his Bosnian origins. How he got to Slavonia is probably bound to remain unknown to us for all; he may have been either a captive or a refugee or a simple renegade. As early as March 1492 we find him among the representatives of the Slavonian nobility at Buda, although in the lower regions of the list.<sup>442</sup> In the summer of 1494 he commanded, together with Philip and George Businci, the army (*exercitum*) of ban Ladislás Kanizsai.<sup>443</sup> The next year we see him as a tax collector in the county of Pozsega.<sup>444</sup> A year later he was appointed as *provisor curie* of Jajce and functioned as such until 1502.<sup>445</sup> The bans of Jajce at the time of his appointment were Ladislás Kanizsai and John Bebek, and Elias, to judge from his role in 1494, was apparently a *familiaris* of the former. Later on, however, he probably became an agent of the royal will who operated more or less independently under the subsequent bans of Jajce. As such he governed the Benedictine abbey of Béla (Bijela) and the castle of Aparovc belonging to it. Despite the fact that in November 1500 king Wladislaw donated the abbey to the duke of St Sava and ordered Elias to hand it over to

438 Lajos Thallóczy and Samu Barabás, eds., *A Blagay-család oklevéltára* [The Charters of the Blagay Family] (Budapest: Magyar Tudományos Akadémia, 1897), 390. In 1475 *Philippus literatus de Buschyncz* is listed among the *prediales* of bishop Oswald, a group clearly distinguished from the noble *familiares* where, for instance, John Zekyra of Bontusovc is enumerated – MNL OL, DF 261 839.

439 MNL OL, DF 255 925: “Philipus litteratus, Elias Bosnyak in Bwsthyncz commorantes.”

440 Adamček–Kampuš, *Popisi*, 61–62.

441 MNL OL, DL 101 451: “egregii condam Elie Begoyewych de Bwschyncz.”

442 He also seems to be identical with the Elias who figures on the list which contains the members of ban Ladislás Egervári’s following on the same occasion: MNL OL, DL 38 645.

443 MNL OL, DF 232 065.

444 Adamček–Kampuš, *Popisi*, 5. He is certainly not identical with the *Helias*, castellan of Bihać, who was sent by ban Ladislás Kanizsai to the pope in the spring of 1494. See Šišić, *Rukovet*, 81–82.

445 Stipišić–Šamšalović, *Isprave*, no. 3351 (1496); MNL OL, DF 219 138 (1502/1503).

him, in 1502 we still find the castellans appointed by Elias in Aparovc.<sup>446</sup> Moreover, the castle of Atyina and its extensive appurtenances in the county of Körös were likewise allotted to him by the king *pro officio*.<sup>447</sup> It was also Elias who upon royal order occupied the estates of George Szencsei and held them until the latter was granted pardon.<sup>448</sup> As provisor of Jajce he was also castellan of the *castellum* Podgradja (Podgrađe, in the county of Pozsega), and disposed of at least some of the royal troops stationed in Pozsega.<sup>449</sup> Parallel to his office at Jajce he also acted as tax collector in Slavonia.<sup>450</sup>

The offices held by Elias Bosnyák were lucrative enough to enable him to enlarge his possessions in Slavonia. We do know that upon the tenants of Atyina he frequently levied both ordinary and extraordinary taxes, and his behaviour there was surely not exceptional.<sup>451</sup> Thus by 1507 he possessed 75 tenant plots in the county of Körös and a further 18 in that of Zagreb.<sup>452</sup> Moreover, sometime before September 1498 a fortification (*castellum*) had been erected at Businc.<sup>453</sup> In 1502 he felt rich enough to try to buy back the castle of Dobrakucsa for his son-in-law, Francis Nelepeci.<sup>454</sup>

In 1505 he was one of the envoys sent by the Slavonian nobility upon whose request the judge royal transcribed the decrees of the famous diet of Rákos.<sup>455</sup> It may have been at Buda that the newly appointed bans of Slavonia, Andrew Both of Bajna and Francis Balassa designated him as one of their vicebans. He could not take his office, however, before Andrew Both and his new colleague, Mark Horvát had effectively occupied the banate in the first months of 1506. And even then he remained in office for less than a year, for

446 MNL OL, DF 219 138. On the relationship between the abbey of Béla and the bans of Jajce see Stanko Andrić, "Benediktinski samostan Svete Margarete u Bijeli" [The Monastery of Saint Marguerite at Bela], *Tkalčić. Godisnjak društva za povjesnicu zagrebacke nadbiskupije* 9 (Zagreb:n.p., 2005): 68–74.

447 MNL OL, DF 268 148.

448 MNL OL, DF 268 149.

449 MNL OL, DL 59 870: "Elias Bosnyak [...] feria quinta proxima post predictum festum beati Francisci confessoris proxime ut dicitur preteritum quasdam gentes sew stipendiarios eiusdem vestre maiestatis de civitate Posegawar vocata levando et exportando ac versus predictum castellum Podgradya veniri faciendo."

450 MNL OL, DL 46 451 (1498).

451 In 1508 he had an apparently financial quarrel with Joseph (Josa) Somi, ispán of Temes; since Somi was then holding the castle of Atyina, the affair seems to have been connected to it. In any case, it was Benedict Batthyány who intervened as a mediator, calling Elias his compater (*Elia de Bwsyncz compatre nostro*): MNL OL, DL 104 195.

452 Adamček–Kampuš, *Popisi*, 17, 19, 29, 31. In 1504 he is also attested as a neighbour around Tersztenice, so he must also have had lands there, which likewise points in the same direction. See Klaić, "Plemići Svetački," 42–43.

453 MNL OL, DF 232 006.

454 On this affair see the chapter on the Nelepeci. Elias Bosnyák as the father-in-law of Francis Nelepeci: János Karácsonyi, "Katonai Becsületbírótság 1515–1516" [Military Court of Honour 1515–1516], *Hadtörténelmi Közlemények* 1891: 487.

455 Kukuljević, *Jura regni*, part II, 254–59.

before February 1507 both he and the other viceban, Vitus Garázda of Kamarca were removed and replaced by Louis Pekri and Francis Nelepeci. Since the latter was the very son-in-law of Elias, the change may have been preceded by an agreement between them. Neither was he affected by the fall from grace of his former lord, Andrew Both, for in 1508/09 he was officially given 200 florins from the Slavonian tax, the same sum as allotted to the viceban of the day, Paul Čavlović, although we do not know for what kind of services.<sup>456</sup> In 1509 the treasurer, Francis Várdai wanted to entrust to him anew the collection of the Slavonian tax, but he refused and recommended someone else instead of himself.<sup>457</sup> Sometime after 1505, but most probably after his leave from the office of viceban, he joined margrave George of Brandenburg, and became his castellan at Rakonok.<sup>458</sup> His service there must have come to a bad end, however, for in 1510 he was already being sued by the margrave for some violent acts committed on the latter's lands, and Elias even insulted physically the margrave's attorney at the congregation of the Slavonian nobility.<sup>459</sup>

Despite his ambitions and ample resources, not all his efforts at enlarging his possessions in Slavonia succeeded. He failed, for example, to acquire the considerable heritage of Andrew Henning of Szomszédvár (Susedgrad, CRO), in the county of Zagreb, although he had already procured for himself a royal mandate of introduction.<sup>460</sup> A year before, in July 1505, he did receive a royal donation, together with Stephen Prasovci and Peter Horvát, castellan of Dombro (Dubrava, CRO).<sup>461</sup> This donation seems to have been the origin of his settlement in the county of Zagreb. It is not surprising that George Prasovci, together with whose son he received the royal grant in 1505, commissioned Elias Bosnyák (and George Kerecsényi) with the execution of his last will.<sup>462</sup> Elias Bosnyák died before October 1512, without leaving a male heir.<sup>463</sup> Some of his lands were accordingly inherited by his son-in-law, Francis Nelepeci,<sup>464</sup> whereas others were in 1520 still held by his widow.<sup>465</sup>

456 Adamček–Kampuš, *Popisi*, 46.

457 MNL OL, DL 25 524.

458 MNL OL, DL 37 949.

459 MNL OL, DL 37 866.

460 Stipišić–Šamšalović, *Isprave*, no. 3827.

461 MNL OL, DF 255 550. This Peter Horvát of Vinodol is surely identical with the Peter Horvát whom Elias recommended as tax collector four years later.

462 MNL OL, DF 232 179.

463 MNL OL, DL 101 451.

464 Adamček–Kampuš, *Popisi*, 58. In 1543, when Businc appears again, John Nelepeci is still holding a portion of it together with a number of other people: *ibid.*, 136.

465 *Ibid.*, 122.

## 2.2.7. Čavlović (Chawlowych) of Gyurkovec (de Gywrkowcz)

As I will try to demonstrate below, it was in all probability from Croatia that the Čavlović family, later called of Gyurkovec, came to Slavonia, apparently during the reign of king Matthias. In any case, there is no trace of the family in the county of Kőrös before. Sometime prior to 1490 a certain Čavlović the younger (*Challowith junior*) was listed in the service of the king with 32 horsemen.<sup>466</sup> Unfortunately, it is impossible to decide whether the person in question was John Čavlović or his presumed kinsman (brother or son), Paul.<sup>467</sup> In any case, he figures in the group of the Slavonian nobles, although no Čavlović can be found on the tax list from 1495.

The most important would be to identify the village whose name the family bore. Gyurkovec seems identical with the village possessed by the Palicsnai family, where Ladislav Grebeni and later Balthasar Batthyány also held portions.<sup>468</sup> Yet it is impossible to tell how and when the Čavlović acquired the village or at least part of it, and whether it was already connected to the marriage of Paul from the Batthyány family, to be discussed later on. Whatever the case, the Paul Horváth who is mentioned at Gyurkovec in 1500 can be identified, although not without some hesitation, with the later Paul Čavlović, and thus at least his geographical origins become evident.<sup>469</sup>

What is beyond doubt is that John Čavlović married the daughter of Emeric Raveni, called Helen (Ilka), and thus became related to Balthasar Batthyány.<sup>470</sup> He died before May 1497, when his widow is mentioned.<sup>471</sup> The beginnings of the career of his brother or son, Paul, are obscure. In case our identification with Paul Horváth is right, he was the deputy of George Kanizsai as ban of Belgrade in 1503.<sup>472</sup> Late in 1508 he was appointed, together with Balthasar Batthyány, as Slavonian viceban of John Ernuszt and George Kanizsai. They left from office early in 1510, and whereas Batthyány later returned as the deputy of ban Peter Beriszló, Čavlović also served the bishop-ban, but it is not clear exactly where and how.<sup>473</sup>

466 MNL OL, DL 104 613.

467 Apart from the "family" name, the fact that both of them were called of Gyurkovec makes their relationship evident.

468 MNL OL, DL 100 901.

469 MNL OL, DL 107 125: "nobilis domina Margaretha relicta quondam Jacobi de Bakhegh et Paulus Horwath gener eiusdem;" their village called Gywrkowcz is mentioned. Bakhegh was indeed in the county of Kőrös (Adamček-Kampuš, *Popisi*, 31), yet I have so far found no noble family of this name in the sources.

470 Balthasar's adopted father, Ladislav Hermanfi, had married Anne Raveni, sister of Emeric. See below the chapter on the Grebeni family.

471 MNL OL, DF 231 968: "nobilis domina Ilka vocata filia nobilis Emerici de Rawen relicta vero quondam Johannis Chawlowych dicti de Gywrkowcz."

472 MNL OL, DL 25 420.

473 MNL OL, DL 104 635: "Circa dominicam oculi Paulo Chalowyth et Emerico Fanchy servitoribus reverendissimi domini bani ad rationem sallarii sui de panno londis ul. XI pro fl. VIII. d. LXXX."

Later on, however, he was removed from Slavonia and became increasingly attached to the royal court. This was evidently a consequence of his (second) marriage with Justine Batthyány, the daughter of Nicholas, thanks to which he obtained a share in the Batthyány lands in the county of Fejér.<sup>474</sup> Moreover, he thereby also became the brother-in-law of John Gyulai, who had married Justine's sister, Sophie. In 1518 he was already a noble *assessor* of the royal council elected from the county of Fejér, and represented the same county at the assembly of Tolna.<sup>475</sup> A year later he accompanied Stephen Verbóci in an embassy to the Pope.<sup>476</sup> In 1522 he is referred to as castellan of Óvár, in the county of Moson,<sup>477</sup> and in 1526 he was royal councillor (*consiliarius*).<sup>478</sup>

Nevertheless, he remained firmly rooted in Slavonia, where he acquired further possessions. By 1507 at the latest he had certainly put his hand upon a considerable portion of Ervence, possibly by right of pledge.<sup>479</sup> He also acquired the estate of Vojkkeresztúr, that is, the inheritance of master Nicholas Vojkfi, deputy prothonotary of Slavonia (died in 1504) with the *castellum* standing there.<sup>480</sup> After the extinction of the Adefi branch of the Kasztellánfi family, he also became joint owner of the estate of Szentlélek, again by right of his wife. In July 1524 he donated, together with Louis Pekri and Stephen Bocskai, and his own wife, Justine, a tenant plot to the local Saint Wolfgang chapel.<sup>481</sup> He had at least three sons, Wolfgang, Louis and John, none of which can be followed after 1526.<sup>482</sup>

474 Iván Borsa, "A Somogy Megyei Levéltár Mohács előtti oklevelei" [The Pre-Mohács Charters Preserved in the Archives of Somogy County], in *Somogy megye múltjából. Levéltári évkönyv* 14, ed. József Kanyar, (Kaposvár: Somogy Megyei Levéltár, 1983), no. 163. In 1522 he is even cited "de domo habitacionis sue solite videlicet residencie eiusdem in possessione Batthyán" (MNL OL, DL 91 065).

475 András Kubinyi, "A királyi tanács köznemesi ülnökei a Jagelló-korban" [The Noble Assessors of the Royal Council in the Jagello Period], in *Mályusz Elemér emlékkönyv* [Festschrift in Honour of Elemér Mályusz], ed. Éva H. Balázs, Erik Fügedi, and Ferenc Maksay (Budapest: Akadémiai, 1984), 263, n. 27.

476 Vilmos Fraknói, "Tomori Pál kiadatlan levelei," *Történelmi Társ.* 1. sor., 5 (1882): 85. Here as "Paulum Horwath Charlawisth."

477 MNL OL, DL 91 065.

478 MNL OL, DL 24 305.

479 Adamček-Kampuš, *Popisi*, 29.

480 MNL OL, DL 101 519. Probably by marrying the widow of master Nicholas, see below at the Garázda/Vojkfi.

481 MNL OL, DF 261 910.

482 MNL OL, DL 101 519.



### 2.2.8. Csupor of Monoszló (Čupor od Moslavina, Chupor de Monozlo)

The Monoszló kindred, from which the Csupor family descended, was one of the most illustrious, and its presence in Slavonia can be dated back to as early as the twelfth century.<sup>483</sup> The possessions of the kindred originally spread in the form of a wide arc through a long chain of southern counties from that of Zagreb to Csanád,<sup>484</sup> and their political importance was entirely in keeping with their landed wealth. Thomas I was ban of Slavonia under Andrew II, his grandsons held important posts under Stephen V and played a considerable role in the internal disturbances following the death of the king.<sup>485</sup>

The Csupor family, however, which descended from master Stephen called “Csupor”, the son of Stephen,<sup>486</sup> had no possessions outside Slavonia. Perhaps because one member of the kindred, namely Peter, fought against king Charles I on the side of the Kőszegi brothers,<sup>487</sup> perhaps for some other reasons, no members of the kindred are known to have played any role worthy of mention under the Angevins. Consequently, the Csupor family, although still one of the richest in Slavonia, gradually became one of purely local importance. Stephen himself and all his sons bore the title of master, a sign of social eminence, but the *vicecomitatus* of Krassó county, which Thomas son of Stephen held for some years in the service of palatine Nicholas Garai around 1380 was but a distant and dim reflection of the kindred’s former glory.<sup>488</sup> Moreover, one of his brothers, John, who in 1395 was one of the two Slavonian noblemen who asked Sigismund to transcribe the judicial privilege originally issued by king Louis I,<sup>489</sup> got involved in the revolt against the king in 1403, and consequently his portions in the family estates were donated to his nephews, Paul and Stephen.<sup>490</sup>

Yet it was precisely the service of Garai which opened the way for a new social rise. When Nicholas Garai the younger was appointed as ban of Croatia and Slavonia, Paul, son of George became his castellan of Klissza (Klis) in

483 Karácsonyi, *Magyar nemzetségek*, 834. It is to be remarked, however, that the kindred is not mentioned as of Monoszló (*de genere Monozlo*) before the fourteenth century.

484 Ibid., 839–41. I also reckon among the original lands of the kindred the estate of Monoszló (Moslavina Podravska, CRO) along the river Drava, which was owned by the chapter of Pécs in the later middle ages.

485 Ibid., 836–37.

486 Engel, *Középkori magyar genealógia*, Monoszló nem Csupor.

487 Pál Engel, “Az ország újraegyesítése. I. Károly küzdelmei az oligarchák ellen (1310–1323)” [The Reunification of the Country. The Struggles of Charles I against the Oligarchs (1310–1323)], in idem, *Honor, vár, ispánság*, 347.

488 Engel, *Archontológia*, vol. I, 144.

489 Smičiklas, *Codex diplomaticus*, vol. XVIII, 37.

490 Zsigmondkori Oklevéltár, vol. IV, no. 2847.



Croatia.<sup>491</sup> Garai proved to be a staunch supporter of king Sigismund, and consequently remained one of the pillars of the reign until his death. His choice as a lord was thus the best possible decision in these critical years, and paid off well. Yet Paul seems to have soon shifted his allegiance to another of king Sigismund's leading barons, namely count Hermann of Cilli, whose daughter Barbara became queen of Hungary. In 1408 Paul was appointed by the king as ispán of the counties Körös and Zagreb, and in 1412 he became ban of Slavonia.<sup>492</sup> It should be added, however, that the administration of the estates belonging to the banal *honor* was in the hands of queen Barbara.<sup>493</sup> One of his brothers, George, was alispán of Varasd for count Herman of Cilli, whereas the other, Stephen was the queen's *magister tavarnicorum* in the early 1410s, and her master of the doorkeepers after 1423; he also acted as royal tax collector in Slavonia.<sup>494</sup> Both Paul and Stephen were titled *magnificus*, and thus counted among the real barons of the realm. It was therefore not without reason that Akacius, son of Paul called himself "de genere baronum procreatus,"<sup>495</sup> whereas his brother, bishop Demetrius modestly described himself as having descended on both sides "from the great baronial kindreds of the Hungarian realm".<sup>496</sup>

Paul died an unglorious death in Bosnia in 1415,<sup>497</sup> Stephen disappeared after 1429. Among the sons of Paul Akacius and George entered the royal court, and accompanied, together with the third brother Demetrius, king Sigismund for the imperial coronation to Rome.<sup>498</sup> In 1435 Akacius was referred to as imperial knight and acted as tax collector in Slavonia.<sup>499</sup> It may have been already in Italy or upon their return that they acquainted themselves with Matko Tallóci, ban of Slavonia from 1435. It was evidently due to the influence of Tallóci that the youngest of the three brothers, Demetrius became bishop of Knin in 1438,<sup>500</sup> whereas Akacius was appointed as viceban and ispán first of Zagreb and later of Körös.<sup>501</sup> The third brother, George joined John Hunyadi and became his deputy-voevode of Transylvania.<sup>502</sup> Bishop

491 Engel, *Archontológia*, vol. I, 343.

492 On the career of Paul see *ibid.*, II, 54.

493 Engel, *Királyi hatalom*, 73.

494 Engel, *Archontológia*, vol. II, 54; *Zsigmondkori Oklevéltár*, vol. X, no. 862, vol. XI, no. 717.

495 Lukinović, *Povijesni spomenici*, vol. VI, 374.

496 *Ibid.*, 588: "ex utroque parente de magno baronum genere regni Ungarie." We do not know who the wife of ban Paul was, but this statement of his son proves that he married himself with a woman belonging to one of the baronial families.

497 Mályusz, *Zsigmond király*, 111.

498 Csukovits, "Nagy utazás," 33.

499 MNL OL, DL 44 073.

500 Engel, *Archontológia*, vol. I, 85.

501 In fact, he may have been simultaneously ispán of Körös and Zagreb from the recovery of the Tallóci brothers in Slavonia in 1440 until beyond October 1442, when he is last referred to as viceban.

502 Engel, *Archontológia*, vol. I, 15.

Demetrius was even involved in the conflict between the Tallóci brothers and the counts of Cilli over the bishopric of Zagreb, when in December 1444 ban Matko helped him with the force of arms to occupy the episcopal palace at Zagreb. Although bishop Demetrius had to leave after the death of Matko Tallóci, he did not give up his pretensions to the see of Zagreb until 1466.<sup>503</sup>

After the political takeover of the counts of Cilli in Slavonia the Csupor brothers naturally turned to John Hunyadi for assistance. Although their possessions do not seem to have suffered any loss in the tumultuous years of 1445/46, Akacius certainly left Slavonia and became a member of Hunyadi's entourage.<sup>504</sup> He fought in the Ottoman campaigns of the governor.<sup>505</sup> At the assembly of September 1447 he was listed, together with Benedict Turóci, in the group of nobles above the ordinary county envoys.<sup>506</sup> His brother, George, also served the governor in his anti-Ottoman wars,<sup>507</sup> whereas later he seems to have cared more for the salvation of his soul; for it was apparently him, and not his namesake among the sons of Caspar, who founded the Franciscan monastery at (Monoszló)váralja, and petitioned in 1465 at Rome for a permission to visit the Holy Sepulchre with two other laymen.<sup>508</sup> It is probable that he even entered the monastery he had himself founded at Váralja.<sup>509</sup> The

503 Pálosfalvi, "Cilleiek és Tallóciak," 71. On the subsequent history of the see of Zagreb until the removal of bishop Demetrius see Idem, "Vitovec János," 468–69.

504 He is referred to as Hunyadi's janitor in 1448, although it is uncertain what the term means: MNL OL, DL 55 389.

505 MNL OL, DL 44 518.

506 Mályusz, "Magyar rendi állam," 531.

507 Lukinović, *Povijesni spomenici*, vol. VII, 478–79.

508 Váralja: Romhányi, *Kolostorok*, 45, following János Karácsonyi, *Szt. Ferencz rendjének története Magyarországon 1711-ig* [The History of the Franciscan Order in Hungary until 1711], vol. II of 2 (Budapest: n.p., 1922–1924), 554. Pilgrimage: Archivio Segreto Vaticano. Sacra Poenitentia Apostolica. Registra Matrimonialium et Diversorum, vol. 12 [1465]: "Georgius Chupor miles Zagrabiensis cupit visitare Sacrum Sepulchrum dominicum cum aliis duobus sociis secularibus." It is not known whether he finally undertook the journey or not. In fact, it is not easy to make a distinction between the two Georges. The elder George, son of Paul, was still alive in May 1464 (MNL OL, DL 35 097, faulty abstract in *Levéltári Közlemények* 12 (1934): 135), whereas the other George, son of Caspar, seems to have disappeared by 1468, when only his brother Stephen is mentioned (DF 255 802). Since in 1452 neither he nor Stephen is mentioned together with their father, at that time they may still have been minors. The other George is recorded to have petitioned favours from the Apostolic See in 1450 (Lukinović, *Povijesni spomenici*, vol. VII, 183), to have donated land to the Pauline monks of Garics in 1460 (*Levéltári Közlemények* 12 (1934): 114), and was especially concerned about the fate of his soul at that time (*ibid.*, 115); it seems thus reasonable to attribute to him the foundation of the Franciscan cloister as well. See the next note as well.

509 In 1464 George wanted to enter the observant Franciscan order, and petitioned for the necessary dispensation in Rome (Lukinović, *Povijesni spomenici*, vol. VII, 478–79). In 1469 the widow of Caspar Csupor laid a complaint against a certain "Gregory" Csupor, Franciscan friar, who failed to repay her a debt he had contracted while still living in the world; it is, in fact, very probable that Gregory is a misreading of George who, in case this hypothesis is true, was still alive then, and did in fact enter the order. Menyhért Érdűhelyi, "Kutatásaim a római levéltárakban" [Researches in the Roman Archives], *Katholikus Szemle* 10 (1896): 628.

1440s and early 1450s brought the time of internal strife for the Csutor as well: on the one hand, between the sons of ban Paul and Caspar, son of Stephen, and, on the other, between the sons of Paul themselves, concerning the division of their paternal lands.<sup>510</sup> Although both Akacius and George seem to have disappeared from the political scene after 1447, their attachment to Hunyadi paid off abundantly in the next generation.

George seems to have left no offspring, whereas among the sons of Akacius, born from his wife, Mary Kórógyi, the daughter of Philip (Fülpös) Kórógyi, *magister tavernicorum* of the queen,<sup>511</sup> John and Ladislas must have died quite early.<sup>512</sup> The third son, Nicholas, made a career which dwarfed even that of his grandfather, ban Paul. It was evidently thanks to the services which his father had rendered to governor Hunyadi that he gained access to the court of the latter's son, king Matthias in the late 1460s. First attested as a court knight in 1467,<sup>513</sup> he accomplished thanks to the constant backing of the king a rapid political and social rise which stands almost unparalleled in the period. He was present as still a court knight in the king's campaign against Jan Svehla in January 1467,<sup>514</sup> in the suppression of the Transylvanian revolt later during that year, and in the subsequent Moldavian expedition.<sup>515</sup> In 1468 he was appointed as voevode of Transylvania and ispán of the Székelys,<sup>516</sup> and became one of the most trusted supporters of Matthias. He participated in the king's Bohemian and Polish wars,<sup>517</sup> took an active part in the royal

510 Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv, Vienna, Archives of the Erdődy family (HHStA, Erdődy), 11078, 11082, 11084–11088.

511 MNL OL, DF 255 968. In this charter the wife of Michael Rohfi, that is, Catherine Csutor, is said to be the daughter of Mary Kórógyi. In his last will, Stephen Csutor called Catherine his *soror*, which would literally mean that she was also the daughter of Caspar, whose wife then would be Mary Kórógyi. Since, however, the widow of Akacius is constantly called Mary, and that of Caspar Anne, it is more reasonable to suppose that Catherine was merely a cousin of Stephen, and that she was in fact the daughter of Akacius Csutor and Mary Kórógyi; this marriage would also account for the fact that Nicholas Csutor received from Matthias the Kórógyi inheritance, to which he could lay a claim via his mother.

512 They are last mentioned in 1453: *Levéltári Közlemények* 11 (1933): 92.

513 András Kubinyi lists him as a court knight as early as 1459 (Idem, "A Mátyás-kori államszervezet" [The Government of Hungary under King Matthias], in *Hunyadi Mátyás. Emlékkönyv Mátyás király halálának 500. évfordulójára* [Matthias Hunyadi. Studies in Commemoration of the Five Hundredth Anniversary of his Death], ed. Gyula Rácz and László V. Molnár (Budapest: Zrínyi, 1990), 128, n. 120), but the date of the charter he refers to is in fact 1467. Cf MNL OL, DL 33 355.

514 MNL OL, DL 100 762.

515 Árpád Nógrády, "Mennyit ér a kegyelemlevél?" [What is a Letter of Pardon Worth?], in *Honoris causa*, ed. Tibor Neumann and György Rác, 238. He took part in Moldavian campaign *inter ceteros aule nostre milites*: MNL OL, DL 36 393.

516 Shortly before 4 January 1468: Franz Zimmermann et al., eds., *Urkundenbuch zur Geschichte der Deutschen in Siebenbürgen*, 7 vols, (Hermannstadt–Cologne–Vienna–Bucharest: n.p., 1892–1991), vol. VI, 318.

517 MNL OL, DL 107 471 (Vienna, February 1470): "Universorum gencium regalium in marchionatu Moravie capitaneus supremus." In April 1471 he is *relator* of a royal charter at Pressburg: DL 100 809.

council,<sup>518</sup> and was rewarded with immense lands, among them the important estate of Verőce (Virovitica, CRO) and the title of perpetual ispán which went with it, and the whole heritage of Caspar Kórógyi, one of the richest magnates of southern Hungary.<sup>519</sup> He was also one of the major beneficiaries of the confiscations which afflicted the noble leaders of the Transylvanian revolt.<sup>520</sup> It is impossible even to gauge what the top of his career might have been had a premature death not put an end to his astonishing rise in 1474.

Yet his career, however successful, remained an intermezzo in the history of the family. He had no children, his brothers deceased before him, and his cousin from the other branch of the family inherited neither his immense possessions nor his political influence. The estates he had received from Matthias, with the exception of some of the Transylvanian ones, were all granted away by the king shortly after his death to influential barons of his court.<sup>521</sup>

At the time of the death of Nicholas his only surviving kinsman was Stephen, son of Caspar. The branches of Nicholas and Thomas seem to have disappeared by the second decade of the fifteenth century. As for the descendants of Stephen, once master of the janitors for queen Barbara, they proved either unable or unwilling to accomplish anything comparable to the breathtaking rise of Nicholas. Caspar, his only known son from his marriage with Margaret, daughter of the otherwise obscure Peter Podhorcsányi from the county of Hont (SL),<sup>522</sup> is almost impossible to grasp; one piece of information seems to prove that he was constantly staying in Slavonia,<sup>523</sup> and died before May 1462.<sup>524</sup> His wife, as we have seen above, was a certain Anne of unknown origins.<sup>525</sup> Among his sons George must have died fairly young; in 1463 he obtained together with his brother, Stephen, an authorisation to build a fortification on any of their lands in Körös from king Matthias.<sup>526</sup> Stephen, on the other hand, although occasionally titled *magnificus*,<sup>527</sup> remained a person of purely local influence. He took part in important

518 Kubinyi, "Bárók a királyi tanácsban," 204.

519 MNL OL, DL 33 423; Engel, "Világi nagybirtok," 66, n. 129.

520 Nógrády, "Kegyelemlevél" *passim*.

521 Engel, "Világi nagybirtok," 55.

522 Engel, *Középkori magyar genealógia*, Monoszló nem Csupor.

523 MNL OL, DF 231 261 (1450): "opidum Monozlo locum scilicet habitacionis egregii Gaspar Chwpor de eadem Monozlo."

524 *Levéltári Közlemények* 12 (1934): 124–25.

525 She may have belonged to the Blagaj family: Thallóczy–Barabás, *Blagaj oklevéltár*, 382–83. This hypothesis is perhaps underpinned by the fact that Stephen posed as an arbitrator in a case involving the members of the Blagaj family, and designated two members of the same family among the executioners of his testament.

526 HHStA, Erdődy 11094.

527 MNL DL, DF 282 454, DF 255 911, DF 255 913. This latter charter is especially interesting, for, whereas Stephen Csupor is titled *magnificus*, Bernard Rohfi is called *egregius*.

arbitrations,<sup>528</sup> was one of the special royal deputies sent out for defining the borders separating the royal castellany of Medve from the possessions of the bishopric of Zagreb,<sup>529</sup> and by reason of his extensive estates seemed important enough to Oswald, bishop of Zagreb to sue him separately before the legate's court in the case of the tithe.<sup>530</sup> In 1491 he was one of the executors of the last will prepared by deputy-palatine Ladislas Hermanfi of Greben,<sup>531</sup> whereas among the appointed executors of his own testament we find bishop Oswald himself as well as people of baronial status such as two counts of Blagaj and John Henning of Szomszédvár.<sup>532</sup> His outstanding status within Slavonia is proved by another fact as well: on the list prepared sometime before the death of king Mathias about the number of horsemen maintained by the Slavonian and Croatian nobility for the service of the king, Stephen Csupor figured with 40 cavalry, with which he came second in Slavonia after Balthasar Batthyány (50), and did not lag far behind the counts of Blagaj and Zrin (50 each) either.<sup>533</sup> It is all the more conspicuous that we do not find him on any of the lists enumerating the leading Slavonian nobility, nor was he present among the Croatian and Slavonian leaders at Buda in March 1492. In the last case his absence may have been explained by his illness, but his previous "abstinence" from the internal affairs of Slavonia certainly calls for an answer.

The last two years of Stephen were probably the most difficult in his whole life. In December 1490 the invading troops of Maximilian of Habsburg devastated and burnt his lands and even lay siege to his *castellum* in Monoszló.<sup>534</sup> Fortunately enough, we have Stephen's own *post festa* account of what happened before. According to him, Balthasar Batthyány made a secret agreement with the captain of Maximilian, James Székely, and promised to secure the support of the leading Slavonian nobility for the Habsburg. Upon the request of Batthyány, Stephen Csupor unsuspectingly sent his chaplain to him, and when the latter informed his lord, he immediately turned down the offer and decided to remain faithful to Wladislaw II. Things were a lot more complicated, as we will see later, but it remains a fact that consequently several villages belonging to Monoszló were plundered by troops that James Székely had sent from Csázma.<sup>535</sup> Moreover, only a year later the castellan of Rakonok, on the way to Jajce with his foot soldiers, camped again in the town of Monoszló, causing considerable damage to its inhabitants and to their lord.<sup>536</sup>

528 Thallóczy-Barabás, *Blagay oklevéltár*, 384–86; MNL OL, DL 107 065.

529 MNL OL, DL 37 582.

530 MNL OL, DF 268 111.

531 MNL OL, DL 107 608.

532 *Levéltári Közlemények* 13 (1935): 253–57.

533 MNL OL, DL 104 613. On the dating of the list see section on the Szencsei.

534 MNL OL, DF 231 847.

535 MNL OL, DF 255 911.

536 MNL OL, DF 255 913.

Stephen Csupor seems at that time to have been already ill; he prepared his last will on 24 December 1492, and died within days thereafter.<sup>537</sup> He had no surviving children either from his first wife, called Barbara, nor from the second, Elizabeth Pető of Gerse.<sup>538</sup> Indeed, in his last years he may have taken the lower ecclesiastical orders, for the Stephen Csupor of Monoszló, *diaconus*, who in 1489 petitioned at Rome privileges for the monastery at Váralja can only be identical with him.<sup>539</sup> His inheritance, the castle of Szarvaskő, the town and *castellum* of Monoszló and the dozens of villages belonging to them had accordingly been donated by Wladislaw II in advance to Thomas Bakócz, then bishop of Győr, and his relatives,<sup>540</sup> and the grant was confirmed after the death of Stephen Csupor.<sup>541</sup> In the last days of January 1493 the king's commissioner, Andrew Both of Bajna was already engaged in the occupation of the Csupor lands, in theory for the ruler, in practice for the all-influential chancellor.<sup>542</sup> In 1494 the former possessions of the Csupor family were registered under the bishop of Eger, and were supposed to pay 286 florins, that is, they included some 572 inhabited tenant plots.<sup>543</sup>

### 2.2.9. Dersfi of Szerdahely

The Dersfi family descended from the Győr kindred, and took its name from the possession of Szerdahely, in the county of Somogy, which was acquired by their ancestor called Ders in 1245.<sup>544</sup> Nicholas Szerdahelyi, after he had divided his estates with his brother Peter in 1346, had eighteen villages in Somogy and some minor pieces of land in Baranya, by virtue of which he already counted among the wealthy nobility of his native county.<sup>545</sup> The son of Nicholas, Ders was ispán of Ung in 1380–1381, and is attested as a knight of the queen's court for some years.<sup>546</sup>

A much more remarkable career was that of his nephew, called Martin "Ders", who established himself in Slavonia. He was brought up in the court of a powerful baron, Detre Bebek,<sup>547</sup> and consequently became his *familiaris*.

537 *Levéltári Közlemények* 13 (1935), 253–57.

538 Engel, *Középkori magyar genealógia*, Monoszló nem Csupor.

539 Antal Beke, "Római emlékek a magyar egyház XV-ik századi történetéből" [Roman Sources for the History of the Hungarian Church in the Fifteenth Century], *Történelmi Tár*, 2. sor., 1 (1900): 10.

540 MNL OL, DL 93 616.

541 HHStA, Erdődy 11121.

542 MNL OL, DL 46 288.

543 Adamček–Kampuš, *Popisi*, 4.

544 Karácsonyi, *Magyar nemzetségek*, 555.

545 *Ibid.*

546 Engel, *Archontológia*, vol. II, 230.

547 Árpád Nógrády, "A Szerdahelyiek és a rojcsai prediálisok" [The Szerdahelyi Family and the Prediales of Rojcsa], *Történelmi Szemle* 18 (2001): 1–2, 73.



From 1389 to 1392 he was the viceban of his lord in Slavonia, then followed him as his deputy to the county of Temes. After a brief period in the service of Detre's son, archbishop Nicholas of Kalocsa, he returned to Slavonia as viceban for a second time. He remained Detre's deputy even after the latter had been appointed as palatine by king Sigismund, and, with fine political judgement, left him right before the revolt of 1403.<sup>548</sup> Consequently he did not only save what he had accumulated thus far, but also had the way paved before further acquisitions and a brief baronial career.

The first possession he obtained in the county of Körös was the estate of Rojcsa, with two market towns and a number of villages which constituted a district of conditional nobles.<sup>549</sup> Five years later he also received from the king the neighbouring estate of Tapalóc, where the castle belonging to the royal lordship of Rojcsa had originally stood.<sup>550</sup> The fortification itself, which was left unmentioned by the royal donation, but is referred to later as a *castellum*, was in all probability rebuilt by Martin Ders himself before 1409, when it is mentioned again for the first time.<sup>551</sup> Early in 1403 he accompanied king Sigismund for his Bohemian campaign as one of the leaders of the royal army, and his services there were rewarded with further grants.<sup>552</sup> Besides some minor donations in the counties of Somogy and Baranya, his possessions in Slavonia were considerably extended: he received, in the immediate vicinity of Rojcsa, the two towns of Szentbenedek and Sztreza (Streza, CRO) with some other villages, which were said by the royal charter to amount to two hundred tenant plots altogether.<sup>553</sup>

His adroit shift of allegiance before the revolt of 1403 resulted in a brief baronial career. Already in December 1403 he was member of the baronial group, led by bishop Eberhard of Zagreb, the duty of which was to restore the order in Slavonia,<sup>554</sup> and in 1404 he became a baron himself when Sigismund appointed him as master of the table, and also ispán of Somogy.<sup>555</sup> Although he was removed from his office already in 1406, he continued to be reckoned among the barons and remained a member of the court of king Sigismund.<sup>556</sup> He was captured in Bosnia during the fatal campaign against duke Hrvoje in 1415, and died in captivity despite the extraordinary tax levied upon royal order.<sup>557</sup>

548 On his career see Engel, *Archontológia*, vol. II, 230.

549 Smičiklas, *Codex diplomaticus*, vol. XVII, 513–15.

550 Engel, *Archontológia*, vol. I, 439.

551 Csánki, *Körösmegye*, 17.

552 *Zsigmondkori Oklevéltár*, vol. II/1, nos. 2211, 2212.

553 *Zsigmondkori Oklevéltár*, vol. II/1, no. 2274.

554 Mályusz, *Zsigmond király*, 56–57.

555 Engel, *Archontológia*, vol. I, 47.

556 *Ibid.*, vol. II, 230.

557 Mályusz, *Zsigmond király*, 134.



From his wife, Anne Sági, who descended from the Ákos kindred, Martin had three sons, George, Ders and Peter.<sup>558</sup> Despite the fact that their father had merely been viceban of Slavonia, they were regularly called “sons of ban Martin” (*filii quondam Martini bani*).<sup>559</sup> George seems to have died fairly young, Peter is impossible to grasp through the existing sources, and only the activities of Ders can be followed with some detail. For some time he and his mother were entirely engaged in their struggle with the tenants of Rojcsa over the dues of the latter.<sup>560</sup> In September 1439 he was listed among the leading nobility (*proceres*) who guaranteed the promise of king Albert to lead a campaign against the Ottomans in the coming year,<sup>561</sup> and in June 1440 he was again member of the same group when the estates confirmed the election of king Wladislaw at Buda.<sup>562</sup> He was one of the leaders of the troops sent by Wladislaw to Slavonia, which were defeated by John Vitovec near Szamobor.<sup>563</sup> In April 1444 he was for the third time enlisted in the group immediately following that of the barons among the representatives of the estates at the diet of Buda.<sup>564</sup>

The 1450s were apparently hard times for Ders. In 1453 his town of Rojcsa was occupied by John Vitovec,<sup>565</sup> whereas in 1459 his *castellum* at Bat, in the county of Somogy, was taken and burnt by Nicholas Újlaki and his mercenaries, and Ders himself was thrown out.<sup>566</sup> The affair was evidently connected to the disputed possession of the castle of Kaposújvár in the same county, which had been jointly donated in 1403 by king Sigismund to Martin Ders and John Tamási, and the part of the latter was later acquired by Nicholas Újlaki.<sup>567</sup> Ders married at least twice; his first wife, of an unknown family, was called Catherine,<sup>568</sup> whereas for the second time he married Sophie Töttös, the sister of chief treasurer Ladislas.<sup>569</sup> This second marriage seems to have played an important role in the career of Stephen, the only known son of Ders.

558 Engel, *Középkori magyar genealógia*, Győr nem 2. Szerdahelyi-ág.

559 MNL OL, DL 11 076 (1421): “Nobilium Georgii, Ders et Petri filiorum quondam Martini bani de Zerdahel;” DL 32 843 (1426): “Georgii Ders et Petri filiorum quondam Martini bani de Thapalouch.” Apparently the name Dersfi (at first in the form of filius Ders), first used by Stephen, son of Ders, referred to this latter Ders, son of Martin, and not to earlier members of the family.

560 Nógrády, “Szerdahelyiek,” 75–79.

561 Georgius Bónis and Vera Bácskai, eds., *Decreta Regni Hungariae. Gesetze und Verordnungen Ungarns 1301–1457* (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1976), 306.

562 Mályusz, “Magyar rendi állam,” 76, n. 128.

563 Pálosfalvi, “Cilleiek és Tallóciak,” 57.

564 *Decreta regni 1301–1457*, 335.

565 With the justification that he intended to protect its inhabitants against Ders himself: MNL OL, DL 14 681.

566 MNL OL, DL 15 419: “Ipsium Ders de dicto castello suo Bath tantum in uno pellicio eiecissent.”

567 Engel, *Archontológia*, vol. I, 336.

568 MNL OL, DL 14 429.

569 Engel, *Középkori magyar genealógia*, Győr nem 2. Szerdahelyi ág.

Although he failed to obtain any part of the considerable inheritance of Ladislás Töttös (died in 1468), it was evidently thanks to his connection with the new owners, the Várdai family, themselves related by marriage to the Töttös, that Stephen Dersfi made his way to the royal court. Stephen Várdai, archbishop of Kalocsa and arch-chancellor, was one of the pillars of king Matthias's rule until his death in 1470,<sup>570</sup> and his kinsmen continued to enjoy the royal favour thereafter, even if they did not manage to enter the tiny circle of chief office-holders. Moreover, Stephen Dersfi was also connected via the Várdai to Ladislás Egervári, ban of Slavonia from 1476, whose mother was Barbara Várdai, and whose own career was in all probability launched by archbishop Stephen.

The only charter which refers to Stephen as a *familiaris* of the royal court was issued on 17 March 1476 at Buda, and its date itself strongly supports the hypothesis that Stephen had previously taken part in the siege of Šabac (SRB).<sup>571</sup> Two years later he was authorised by king Matthias, in return for services not detailed, to rebuild his *castellum* at Bat once demolished by Nicholas Újlaki.<sup>572</sup> The fortification was indeed reconstructed somewhat later.<sup>573</sup> At the end of July 1479 we find him at Kutenya (Kutina, CRO) in the company of other local nobles, and his stay there seems to have been connected to the mobilisation of the Slavonian nobility against an Ottoman incursion.<sup>574</sup> Later on his time was probably absorbed by protracted litigation with Lawrence Újlaki over the castle of Kaposújvár and with his distant kinsman, Paul Dancs of Szerdahely over the common possessions in Somogy.<sup>575</sup> He had more luck with the Várdai brothers, from whom he did at least receive the money due to him for the dower and the filial quarter of his grandmother and mother respectively after the Töttös lands.<sup>576</sup>

The hardest days of his life probably came after the death of king Matthias, however. Then all his lands in the county of Körös were temporarily occupied by the Ernuszt brothers, who taxed his tenants there and even set a castellan

570 Kubinyi, *Mátyás király*, 59, 63, 69, 71.

571 MNL OL, DL 17 776. He seems to be staying at Buda three years earlier, in October 1473 as well: DL 32 851.

572 Richárd Horváth, "Középkori kastélyépítési engedélyek Somogy megyéből" [Medieval Licenses of Castle Building from the County of Somogy], in *Castrum. A Castrum Bene Egyesület hírllevele* [Castrum. Gazetteer of the Castrum Association], 1, ed. István Feld, Gábor Szatlóczy, and György Domokos (Budapest: n.p., 2005), 21–22. This charter seems to prove that he remained in contact with the court, even though he is not referred to as its knight any more.

573 It is mentioned in 1501: Miklós Komjáthy, "A somogyi konvent II. Ulászló-kori oklevelei az Országos Levéltárban. 7. közlemény" [The Charters of the Convent of Somogy from the Period of Wladislaw II in the National Archives. Seventh Part], in *Somogy Megye Múltjából. Levéltári Évkönyv* 10, ed. József Kanyar (1979), no. 76.

574 MNL OL, DL 103 843.

575 MNL OL, DL 18 377, DL 70 043, DL 70 056.

576 MNL OL, DL 24 576.

of their own in the *castellum* of Tapalóc.<sup>577</sup> Although Stephen soon recovered his lands, the events were shocking enough for his son Nicholas to fear that the same would happen twenty six years later, after the death of Wladislaw II.<sup>578</sup> Whether the incident was rooted in a political opposition between Stephen Dersfi and the Ernuszt brothers, or it was merely part of the general upheaval that followed the death of Matthias is impossible to decide. Bishop Sigismund was one of the chief partisans of duke Corvin,<sup>579</sup> whereas Stephen Dersfi was present at the diet of Buda in June 1490,<sup>580</sup> and took part in the battle of Csontmező on the side of Stephen Bátori and Paul Kinizsi, the commanders of Wladislaw II.<sup>581</sup>

Stephen died sometime before 1493. From his wife called Catherine, the daughter of Nicholas Tuz of Lak,<sup>582</sup> he left an underage son, Nicholas,<sup>583</sup> who was put under the tutelage of bishop Oswald of Zagreb.<sup>584</sup> The Tuz of Lak were originally also a noble family from the county of Somogy, and this neighbourhood, alongside kinship, accounts for the role of Oswald Tuz in this respect. As soon as he came to adulthood, that is, at the age of sixteen in 1501, he pledged all his possessions in the counties of Körös and Somogy to Emeric Török of Enying and his wife for the enormous sum of 6000 florins, and designated them as his heirs for the case of his dying childless.<sup>585</sup> This measure may have been directed against the expansion of duke Lawrence Újlaki, who, for reasons unknown to us, wanted to put his hands upon all the Dersfi estates.<sup>586</sup> Ambrose Török had obtained the portions of Nicholas Újlaki in the estate of Kaposújvár in 1476, and his son may thus have been a useful ally for Nicholas Dersfi against duke Lawrence. Indeed, in 1503 Nicholas succeeded

577 *Somogy Megye Múltjából* 4 (1973), no. 8; MNL OL, DL 21 225; DF 261 842.

578 MNL OL, DL 104 283.

579 András Kubinyi, "Két sorsdöntő esztendő (1490–1491)" [Two Decisive Years (1490–1491)], *Történelmi Szemle* 33 (1991): 1–2, 27; Tamás Fedeles, "Az 1494/95-ös királyi büntetőhadjárat előzményei" [The Precedents of the Royal Punitive Expedition of 1494/95], in *Aktualitások a magyar középkorkutatásban* [Actualities in the Hungarian Research of the Middle Ages], ed. Márta Font, Tamás Fedeles, and Gergely Kiss (Pécs: Pécsi Tudományegyetem BTK, 2010), 280.

580 MNL OL, DF 252 107.

581 MNL OL, DL 37 683. Interestingly, in 1491 Stephen Dersfi acknowledged that bishop Sigismund and John had merely occupied Tapalóc in order to prevent it from falling into the hands of the German troops, and, moreover, later returned it to him together with appurtenances "melius quam acceperant reformatum et munitum" (DL 19 772, recorded in the MOL register under 1479); in view of the protest of two years later, it is evident that he was forced to declare so.

582 MNL OL, DL 23 182.

583 Thanks to an otherwise rare piece of information we know that he was born around 1485: MNL OL, DL 20 079.

584 MNL OL, DL 20 729: "reverendi domini Osvaldi episcopi ecclesie Zagradiensis tutoris scilicet Nicolai filii quondam Stephani Dersffy de [...] Zerdahel."

585 *Somogy Megye Múltjából* 10 (1979), no. 76.

586 MNL OL, DL 32 875.

in bringing the duke to agreement: the latter resigned the entire castle of Kaposújvár in favour of Nicholas, and only retained for himself half of its appurtenances.<sup>587</sup>

Nicholas seems to have married very young, for already in 1501 his wife, Catherine, is mentioned.<sup>588</sup> She was the daughter of James Bánfi of Alsólendva and Catherine Szécsi,<sup>589</sup> and thus brought her husband into affinity with two of the most illustrious baronial families of contemporary Hungary. She died before 1507, however, and no children are known to have been born from this marriage. Nicholas remarried before 1509 with Perpetua, the daughter of Balthasar Batthyány,<sup>590</sup> who bore him at least three daughters and two sons.<sup>591</sup> Through his second marriage Nicholas became the brother-in-law of Francis Both of Bajna, whose uncle, Andrew was appointed as ban of Slavonia in 1505. It is no wonder, then, that in 1509 we meet him as a *familiaris* of the latter, at that time in open revolt against Wladislaw II.<sup>592</sup>

In the early summer of 1512 Nicholas emerges as captain of Slavonia, and continued to act as such right into 1514,<sup>593</sup> although it is impossible to know what this office involved in terms of governmental or military power. His appointment may have been connected to the campaign planned by ban Emeric Perényi against the Ottomans, but also to the political uncertainties surrounding the very appointment of Perényi and his slow takeover in Slavonia.<sup>594</sup> In the beginning of 1516 he was in the capital enjoying the royal favour,<sup>595</sup> but only two months later, a couple of days after the death of Wladislaw II, he was already begging Balthasar Batthyány to give him a house in the castle of Greben where he could deposit his charters and valuables, fearing an attack similar to that of 1490.<sup>596</sup> Nothing happened, however, and in 1518 he was even appointed as Slavonian viceban by Peter Beriszló.

587 MNL OL, DL 88 892.

588 *Somogy Megye Múltjából* 10 (1979), no. 76.

589 MNL OL, DF 277 175/371 ecw. Engel, *Középkori magyar genealógia*, Hahót nem 4. tábla, Bánfi (alsólendvai)

590 MNL OL, DF 252 258.

591 MNL OL, DL 104 464; DL 24 124.

592 In that year Nicholas Dersfi and Louis Pekri, together with other nobles, refused to hand over the tax collected from their own possessions. Since Louis Pekri was standing beyond doubt in the service of Andrew Both, it is reasonable to suppose that Nicholas was also: MNL OL, DL 25 515.

593 MNL OL, DL 22 310: "egregii domini Nicolai Dersfy de Zerdahel capitanei regni Sclavonie;" DF 275 119.

594 On the events then in Slavonia see Tamás Pálosfalvi, "Bajnai Both András és a szlavón bánság. Szlavónia, Európa és a törökök, 1504–1513" [Andrew Both of Bajna and the Banate of Slavonia, Slavonia, Europe and the Turks 1504–1513], in *Honoris causa*, ed. Tibor Neumann and György Rácz, 286–89.

595 MNL OL, DL 22 849. The king authorised him to construct a bridge on one of his possessions in the county of Somogy and exact toll from the passengers.

596 MNL OL, DL 104 283.

Backed by his lord's support, Nicholas felt strong enough to reclaim some of the Töttös inheritance in Slavonia,<sup>597</sup> and also the part of the senile duke Lawrence Újlaki in the estate of Kaposújvár.<sup>598</sup> His efforts yielded no result, but in 1521 he received further possessions in the county of Körös from king Louis II.<sup>599</sup> In July 1524 he was one of the envoys elected by the assembly of the nobility at Körös.<sup>600</sup> In 1526 he revoked before the chapter of Csázma the treaty of mutual inheritance he had contracted with Emeric Török, for in the meantime his wife, Perpetua Batthyány, had borne to him two sons, Stephen and Wolfgang (Farkas).<sup>601</sup> After 1526 Stephen became captain of Kassa (Košice, SL) and then Cisdanubian captain, and with the baronial title a member of the Hungarian aristocracy from 1564,<sup>602</sup> while Wolfgang was captain of Szigetvár in the 1550s.<sup>603</sup> Nicholas himself also survived Mohács by several years.

### 2.2.10. Dombai

There were two families called Dombai (of Dombó) in medieval Hungary, of roughly the same wealth and the same social prestige.<sup>604</sup> The one which obtained in the first years of the fifteenth century parts of the Gorbonoki lands, confiscated for infidelity,<sup>605</sup> took its name from the Dombó which was situated in the southernmost part of Somogy county. The family likewise descended from the Győr kindred,<sup>606</sup> and possessed some thirty villages in the same county.<sup>607</sup> George, son of Peter seems to have established his career through his marriage with Margaret Töttös, whose family remained prominent even after the accession of Sigismund. In 1406 he became ispán of Zagreb and administrator of the bishopric of Zagreb.<sup>608</sup> Although his office-holding soon

597 MNL OL, DL 101 400: "super districtu Thethwsewyna ac castello Razohathecz oppidisque, villis, possessionibus [...] ad dictum districtum et castellum spectantibus."

598 MNL OL, DL 23 182, DL 23 187, DL 23 189; Miklós Komjáthy, "A somogyi konvent II. Lajos-kori oklevelei az Országos Levéltárban. 3. közlemény" [The Charters of the Convent of Somogy from the Period of Louis II in the National Archives], in *Somogy Megye Múltjából. Levéltári Évkönyv* 3, ed. József Kanyar (1972), no. 61.

599 MNL OL, DL 33 848.

600 MNL OL, DL 102 338.

601 MNL OL, DL 24 265.

602 MNL OL, Libri regii 5, 659–61; Pálffy, "Kerületi és végvidéki főkapitányok," 270; Idem, "Pozsony megyéből a magyar királyság élére" [From the County of Pozsony to the Elite of the Hungarian Kingdom], *Századok* 143 (2009): 857–58.

603 MNL OL, Libri regii 3, 188–89.

604 Kubinyi, "Kaposújvári uradalom," 26.

605 MNL OL, DF 288 468.

606 Karácsonyi, *Magyar nemzetségek*, 556–58; Engel, *Középkori magyar genealógia*, Győr nem 3. Dombai.

607 Csánki, *Történelmi földrajz*, vol. II, 669.

608 Engel, *Archontológia*, vol. I, 258.

came to an end, he seems to have laid solid foundations for the influence of his family in Slavonia. True, apart from a participation in an arbitration in 1424,<sup>609</sup> and two commissions as a royal man, both connected to the estate of Verőce,<sup>610</sup> nothing is known about the eventual activities of George himself south of the Drava, at the congregation of the Slavonian nobility held in March 1439 he was listed right after the Tallóci brothers and bishop Demetrius Csupor, which is a clear sign of his social prestige.

Although during the civil war which followed the death of king Albert two at least of his sons took sides with ban Matko Tallóci, and thus opposed the counts of Cilli, this incident by no means undermined the position of the family in Slavonia.<sup>611</sup> The third son, Nicholas, seems to have started his career in the service of Nicholas Újlaki as alispán of Somogy, but he soon became viceban of Slavonia. His office-holding there was a brief intermezzo within the long *vicebanatus* of John Vitovec, and, although he was nominally the deputy of count Ulrich of Cilli, his appointment should rather be seen as the result of a compromise, which was explained by the uncertain political atmosphere caused by the coming accession of king Ladislas V.

Whatever the case, Nicholas left the office of viceban early in 1453, and reemerged as alispán of Baranya two years later.<sup>612</sup> He did not give up his ambitions in Slavonia, however, and in the same year he took into pledge parts of the estate of Dobrakusca together with Nicholas Kasztellánfi.<sup>613</sup> Two years later he was one of the envoys sent by the Slavonian nobility to king Ladislas.<sup>614</sup> The accession of king Matthias, and the temporary disgrace of his lord, Nicholas Újlaki, even brought for him the possibility of a brief baronial career. In 1459 he was appointed as one of the bans of Macsó, to which was later also added the castellanship of Belgrade. In 1462 he became ban of Dalmatia and Croatia for some time.<sup>615</sup>

Later he seems to have returned definitively to the service of Nicholas Újlaki. In 1468 he was castellan of Atyina in the county of Körös; although the castle belonged to the Garai family, it was upon the joint order of Job Garai and Nicholas Újlaki, both his lords, that Nicholas Dombai committed an act of violent trespass.<sup>616</sup> In 1471 he was already governing the castle of Ráholca for Újlaki, whence he returned to Slavonia as viceban for a second time in 1472–1473. In 1474 and again in 1478 he was listed first among the representatives

609 MNL OL, DF 231 981.

610 MNL OL, DL 33 415, DL 33 416.

611 MNL OL, DL 102 091.

612 On his career see Kubinyi, "Kaposújvári uradalom," 27.

613 MNL OL, DL 102 128.

614 MNL OL, DF 268 080.

615 Kubinyi, "Kaposújvári uradalom," 27.

616 MNL OL, DF 255 801: "ex speciali mandato magnificorum Nicolai de Wylak ac Job de Gara necnon domine Alexandrine relicte quondam Ladislai de dicta Gara matris eiusdem Job dominorum scilicet ipsius Nicolai de Dombo."



of the Slavonian nobility, which shows that in that period he was regarded as its most respected member. Still in 1474 he was referred to as alispán of Somogy, then followed Újlaki, who in the meantime had become king Nicholas of Bosnia, to his new residence at Jajce and became his palatine there. In 1477 he was castellan of another Újlaki castle, that of Berzőce (Stara Brezovica, CRO), and in the same year he again travelled to the king upon the commission of the Slavonian nobility.<sup>617</sup>

Nicholas married Ursula, the daughter of Ladislav Zákányi, and inherited with her hands the estates of his father-in-law in the county of Somogy, together with a *castellum* at Zákány itself.<sup>618</sup> He had two sons, Francis and David. The latter seems to have been born quite late, for, according to his own words, he was brought up by duke Lawrence Újlaki.<sup>619</sup> Francis seems a much less prominent figure than either his father or brother, although both sons, Francis and David, served for some time as *familiares* in the court of Matthias.<sup>620</sup> Francis received together with his brother the lands of John Briga in Slavonia from king Matthias, but they apparently never occupied them.<sup>621</sup> They also exchanged some of their estates in Verőce with Balthasar Batthyány and Ladislav Hermanfi for portions laying closer to Gorbonok.<sup>622</sup> In 1487, however, Francis pledged all his estates, together with the *castellum* at Gorbonok, to his father-in-law, Peter Gudovci and his son for 820 florins, having been previously sentenced to capital punishment at the general assembly of Buda against Ladislav Marcali.<sup>623</sup> A year before most of his possessions in the county of Somogy had been given upon royal orders to the victims of his many violent misdeeds by right of pledge.<sup>624</sup> He died heirless<sup>625</sup> before 1490.

We know a lot more about his younger brother, David. In the critical period following the death of king Matthias he joined Maximilian of Habsburg, and his lands were consequently donated by king Wladislaw to Ladislav Egervári.<sup>626</sup> During the same period David suffered a further loss as well. A neighbouring lord, Michael Imrefi, had occupied his *castellum* at Zákány, which David besieged and took back shortly afterwards. Michael turned to the king, however, who ordered the troops of Somogy county to restore the

617 Kubinyi, "Kaposújvári uradalom" 27. Commissioned by the Slavonian nobility: Kukuljević, *Jura regni*, part II, 208–09.

618 Csánki, *Történelmi földrajz*, vol. II, 584.

619 Borsa, *Balassa család levéltára*, no. 471: "illustri domino Laurentio duci de Wylak [...] qui me nutrit.".

620 MNL OL, DF 231 744 (1482): "fideles nostros egregios Franciscum et David de Dombo aule nostre regie familiares."

621 Stipišić-Šamšalović, *Ispriave*, nos. 2978 and 2979.

622 MNL OL, DL 101 033.

623 MNL OL, DF 231 787: "in facto potencie pariterque in sententia capitali et amissione universorum possessionum [...] convictus."

624 MNL OL, DL 19 123.

625 MNL OL, DF 219 071: "condam Francisco de Dombo hereditibus carenti."

626 MNL OL, DL 19 747.



*castellum* to the plaintiff. Yet the captain of these troops, having taken the *castellum*, handed it over to judge royal Stephen Bátori together with its appurtenances.<sup>627</sup> In 1492 we find David in the company of two archdeacons as an arbitrator in a case involving count Peter of Zrin.<sup>628</sup> Two years later he participated with duke Corvin and his allies in the devastation of the lands belonging to the bishopric of Zagreb.<sup>629</sup> Consequently he followed his lord, duke Lawrence Újlaki into rebellion against the king; in February 1495 he was again accused of infidelity by Wladislaw II, and the lands of his own *familiares* granted away.<sup>630</sup> It may have been as a compensation for his losses that he received from duke Lawrence the *castellum* of Kontovc (Kontovac, CRO), where his own castellan is mentioned in 1495.<sup>631</sup> In 1496 he was castellan of the duke in his *castellum* of Berzőce, and a year later perhaps in the castle of Kaposújvár.<sup>632</sup> Later he recovered the Slavonian lands of his father, by reason of which he had a long conflict with Stephen Gudovci, to whom, as we have seen, the portions of his brother had been pledged.<sup>633</sup> In May 1501 he was thought to have died, for his portions at Gorbonok were donated by king Wladislaw II to palatine Peter Geréb who, however, apparently never took possession of them.<sup>634</sup> The same is true of Moses Buzlai and John Podmanicki, master of the court and master of the chamber respectively, who received the lands of the late David Dombai in January 1504.<sup>635</sup> David prepared his last will in 1504 at Gorbonok, and died heirless soon thereafter.<sup>636</sup>

The death of David Dombai by no means meant that the whole family was extinct, however. Yet we know considerably less about the remaining members of it, and even their exact genealogy cannot be established. Ladislas Dombai, who married the daughter of Blaise Garázda of Istvándi,<sup>637</sup> may have been the son of either of the brothers of Nicholas; he died before 1478,<sup>638</sup> and it is unknown what relationship there was between him and the Ladislas who emerges in 1491.<sup>639</sup> Again, we do not know whose son Andrew Dombai

627 *Somogy Megye Múltjából* 4 (1973), no. 5.

628 MNL OL, DL 33 200.

629 MNL OL, DL 104 017.

630 MNL OL, DF 231 953.

631 *Levélári Közlemények* 3 (1925), 116–17.

632 MNL OL, DL 33 432 (Berzőce); DL 20 561, DL 20 711 (Kaposújvár). In these charters his deputy castellans in the castle are mentioned, but David is not referred to as the castellan of duke Lawrence himself.

633 MNL OL, DL 102 295.

634 MNL OL, DL 34 125.

635 MNL OL, DL 21 234. The royal letter of donation is dated 3 January 1504, which, in view of the fact that David prepared his last will in 1504, would suppose that he did so on the first day of the year and the news arrived to Buda only two days later, and found the two barons ready to petition for his inheritance.

636 Borsá, *Balassa család levéltára*, no. 471.

637 MNL OL, DL 45 385.

638 MNL OL, DL 101 770.

639 MNL OL, DL 33 454.

was, but he evidently belonged to the Dombai family which concerns us here.<sup>640</sup> In 1476 he was castellan of Job Garai in the latter's *castellum* of Sagavica (*Sagawycza*) in the county of Körös,<sup>641</sup> but soon went over to the Ernuszt family, whom he seems to have served thereafter.<sup>642</sup> He had four sons, Francis, Balthasar, Paul and Michael.<sup>643</sup> Francis is referred to as a designated royal man in 1511 in Somogy, whereas Balthasar is recorded as possessing a small portion at Temerje in 1507.<sup>644</sup> The only thing we know about Michael is that he married Sophie Kapitánfi of Desnice.<sup>645</sup>

After the death of David Dombai his lands in both Somogy and Slavonia were donated by Wladislaw II to Stephen Gorbonoki and John Bornemissza, castellan of Buda.<sup>646</sup> After Stephen himself had died heirless, the major part of his Slavonian lands, namely the estate of Gorbonok, came into the hands of John Tahi.<sup>647</sup> Some of them, however, most notably those in Verőce and in Somogy, were in fact appropriated by Joseph (Josa) Dombai. This Joseph occupied these lands immediately after the death of David Dombai, although, at least according to the information of a royal charter, during the lifetime of David he had had no share in it, and the lands were accordingly regarded as having escheated to the Crown.<sup>648</sup> Thus Joseph Dombai, once mentioned as a royal man together with his kinsman Francis,<sup>649</sup> was certainly neither the son nor the grandson of one of the brothers of Nicholas Dombai, for in this case no escheat would have been possible; his relationship to David was more distant, but its exact nature cannot be established. In 1514 he participated to an important arbitration,<sup>650</sup> but otherwise he turns up merely as a neighbour.<sup>651</sup>

In 1535 the lands of David, Joseph and Emeric Dombai in the county of Somogy and elsewhere were donated by king Ferdinand to Thomas Várdai as having escheated to the crown through their heirless deaths.<sup>652</sup> Who this Emeric was I was unable to find out, and the case is similar with John Dombai, whose estates in the counties of Somogy and Baranya were granted away by

640 MNL OL, DL 17 311.

641 MNL OL, DL 33 891.

642 MNL OL, DF 262 134, DF 262 151.

643 Miklós Komjáthy, "A somogyi konvent II. Ulászló-kori oklevelei az Országos Levéltárban. 2. közlemény" [The Charters of the Convent of Somogy from the Period of Wladislaw II in the National Archives. Second Part], in *Somogy Megye Múltjából*, ed. József Kanyar, *Levéltári Évkönyv* 5 (1974), no. 17 = MNL OL, DL 20 026.

644 MNL OL, DL 22 235; Adamček–Kampuš, *Popisi*, 28.

645 MNL OL, DL 101 481.

646 MNL OL, DL 101 385, with the list of all the possessions concerned.

647 See the sections on the Gorbonoki and Tahi families.

648 MNL OL, DL 101 388: "nusquam vivente prefato quondam David de Dombo in dominio prescriptorum jurum possessionariorum eiusdem quondam David extitisset."

649 MNL OL, DL 22 235.

650 MNL OL, DF 252 279.

651 MNL OL, DF 252 259; DL 22 736: "Jobagiones egregii Jose de Dombo in eadem porcione possessionaria in dicta possessione Dombo."

652 MNL OL, Libri regii 1, 301.

the same king in 1558 for infidelity that John had committed as castellan of Verőce by letting himself be bribed by the Ottomans.<sup>653</sup>

### 2.2.11. Ervencei

One of the families whose origins present problems for the solution of which not even probable hypotheses cannot be put forward. The oldest known member of the family is a certain Gregory, whose son Benedict is referred to in 1372.<sup>654</sup> This Gregory, apparently called Idex,<sup>655</sup> must have lived around the middle of the fourteenth century. John, son of Gregory, who is mentioned in 1364 as of *Ruenicha*, may equally have been his son. The possession of Ervence itself turns up two years before, however, when Thomas and Peter, sons of Beke son of Zuylan gave one quarter of their land called Ravenica to the husband of their sister, Philip son of Dominic.<sup>656</sup> Unfortunately, none of these persons can be linked to the future Ervencei. The possession from which they took their name lay amidst the possessions of the Tétény kindred, and does not occur in the sources before the second half of the fourteenth century. It seems originally to have been of considerable extension,<sup>657</sup> and other (probably related) families also held portions of it, among them Peter Sztolnokpekeri, viceban of Emeric Bebek in the critical period before the revolt of 1403.

No wonder, then, that they got involved in both revolts against king Sigismund, and whereas their joining the Horváti brothers had been pardoned by the king, in 1403 their estate of Ervence was donated to the sons of Lawrence Szentandrás, Paul and Stephen.<sup>658</sup> Yet they somehow managed to hinder the introduction of the new owners, and they continued to possess or managed to recover very soon at least part of their lands. Nor was their disgrace definitive, for already in 1413 Nicholas, son of Ladislás was castellan of Dubica (Hrvatska/Bosanska Dubica, CRO/BIH) in the service of Paul Csúpor, governor of the priory of Vrana.<sup>659</sup> His colleague in the office, Peter Wrus, is almost certainly the same person as the Peter Veres of Ervence who was ispán of Zagreb for ban Denis Marcali in 1419–1421.<sup>660</sup> He seems to have married into the Ervencei

653 Ibid., 3, 481.

654 Smičiklas, *Codex diplomaticus*, vol. XIV, 475–76.

655 *Zsigmondkori Oklevéltár*, vol. II/1, no. 2424.

656 Smičiklas, *Codex diplomaticus*, vol. XIII, 263. In the edition the name reads as Kaveyaucha, but in the original (MNL OL, DL 35 223) it is certainly Raveynicha.

657 “possessionem Erwenche vocatam ad trecentos iobagiones se extendentem” (from the charter cited in n. 718 above).

658 Ibid.

659 Engel, *Archontológia*, vol. I, 82.

660 Ibid., vol. I, 259. I was unable to identify the possession of Gonisa after which he is named; it may, perhaps, be Gojnica in the county of Pozsega.

family. As for Nicholas, he was also appointed as ispán of Zagreb in 1417 by David Lack, whereas a year later he is referred to as castellan of Krupa together with Ladislás Szencsei senior.<sup>661</sup>

In the next two decades members of the family only occur in the sources as designated royal men.<sup>662</sup> Things changed after 1435, when Stanislas, the son of Nicholas,<sup>663</sup> became a *familiaris* of ban Matko Tallóci. In the late summer of 1439 he was present in the king's military camp by the Danube, and received two important charters there. One of them confirmed him together with his kinsmen in the possession of their inherited lands by the right of new donation,<sup>664</sup> whereas the other authorised them to build a fortification on any one of their possessions.<sup>665</sup> Both charters were referred to the chancellery by another Slavonian nobleman, namely John, canon of Zagreb and royal prothonotary, commonly known by posterity as John Vitéz, future bishop of Várád (Oradea, RO).

Until the early 1460s we again only have sporadic references to members of the family as royal men.<sup>666</sup> Then Ladislás, the son of Stanislas,<sup>667</sup> joined the entourage of ban John Vitovec,<sup>668</sup> and thus started a career which clearly elevated him and his brother, equally called Stanislas, above the other branches of his family. He continued to adhere to Vitovec even after the latter had been temporarily removed from the banship, and it was upon the request of his lord that Ladislás was donated some possessions in the county of Zagreb by king Matthias in 1466.<sup>669</sup> Moreover, after the death of his father George Vitovec gave him the estate of Szobocsina, together with the *castellum* of Szvibovc, which had been occupied in 1461 from its heiress, Elizabeth Szobocsinai.<sup>670</sup>

Although Elizabeth and her daughter, Dorothy, never resigned their rights concerning Szobocsina, they had no chances against one of the leading *familiares* of the Vitovec family. The situation changed in 1472, however. Sometime before, perhaps as early as 1469 (after the death of John Vitovec), Ladislás had shifted his allegiance and joined John, bishop of Pécs and ban of Slavonia, and became his castellan in the episcopal city. Consequently, he became involved in the conspiracy organised by John and his uncle, the archbishop of Esztergom against king Matthias in 1471. Although only his possession in the county of Tolna, which he had received from bishop John,

661 Ibid., vol. I, 259, 354.

662 *Zsigmondkori Oklevéltár*, vol. IX, no. 770; 1433: MNL OL, DL 103 564.

663 Lukinović, *Povijesni spomenici*, vol. VII, 9.

664 MNL OL, DF 231 184: "Stanislaus filius Nicolai filii Ladislai de Erwencze familiaris fidelis nostri magnifici Mathkonis de Tallowcz."

665 MNL OL, DF 231 192.

666 MNL OL, DL 74 497 (1448); DL 100 756 (1452). In both cases John Kyncheg of Ervence.

667 MNL OL, DL 100 833.

668 MNL OL, DF 233 405. Compare DF 233 308, a different list, but Ladislás figures on both.

669 MNL OL, DF 255 620.

670 MNL OL, DL 107 011.

was confiscated for infidelity,<sup>671</sup> his position in Slavonia was also temporarily shaken. This seems to account for the fact that in April 1472 the husband of Dorothy Szobocsinai, called Michael Oresjai from the county of Verőce, whose brother of the same name was *custos* of Csázma, attacked and robbed the manor of the Ervencei brothers et Szobocsina.<sup>672</sup>

Yet Ladislás Ervencei soon found the way leading out of his difficulties. Sometime before April 1474 he joined Nicholas Újlaki, king of Bosnia, who appointed him as his castellan of Raholca.<sup>673</sup> Profiting from the influence of his lord, he pressured his opponents into a compromise. In May 1474 the two parties divided the appurtenances of Szobocsina; the *castellum* of Szvibovc remained in the hands of the Ervencei brothers, and the tenants of Dorothy and Michael Oresjai were given the right of taking refuge there in case of an Ottoman raid.<sup>674</sup> A year later it was precisely with that pretext that Dorothy and her husband occupied Szvibovc.<sup>675</sup> The Ervencei brothers promptly took it back, however, with the help of their "lords and friends", among them bishop Oswald of Zagreb, and Michael Oresjai died in the skirmish.<sup>676</sup> Some months later another jury was convoked, which confirmed the division of 1474.<sup>677</sup> This time it was one of the arbitrators, Ladislás Hermanfi, who occupied the fortification *more predonico*, and he not only went unpunished but also put his hands upon the portions of Elizabeth and Dorothy Szobocsinai.<sup>678</sup> His action was evidently facilitated by the fact that after the death of Nicholas Újlaki Ladislás Ervencei quarrelled with the son of his late lord, duke Lawrence, over his salary due to him as castellan of Raholca.<sup>679</sup> He also had a dispute with his own brother, Stanislas, caused by the division of their inheritance.<sup>680</sup>

Nevertheless, in the possession of Szvibovc, alongside which they also boasted a *castellum* at Ervence and another one at Atak,<sup>681</sup> in the county of Zagreb, they continued to count as members of the leading nobility of the county, and Ladislás was accordingly listed among them both in 1474 and 1478, first together with Nicholas Ervencei, then in the company of his brother, Stanislas. Either Ladislás or Stanislas took part in the siege of Šabac as well.<sup>682</sup> In 1481 Ladislás was proscribed for his participation in the revolt ten years

671 Csánki, *Történeti feldrajz*, vol. III, 474.

672 MNL OL, DL 107 013, DL 103754.

673 In the service of king Nicholas: MNL OL, DL 107 019. Castellan of Raholca: DL 33 432.

674 MNL OL, DL 37 175.

675 MNL OL, DL 103 771.

676 MNL OL, DL 107 022.

677 MNL OL, DL 100 851.

678 MNL OL, DL 107 030.

679 MNL OL, DL 103 883.

680 MNL OL, DL 102 205.

681 Ervence: MNL OL, DL 103 949; Atak: DL 107 078.

682 See the charter issued in the royal camp at Futak on 23 November 1475: MNL OL, DF 276 827.

before, but he was promptly granted pardon by the king.<sup>683</sup> In the same year he appears as one of the royal men sent for the introduction of the Bánfi brothers into the estate of Szaplonca.<sup>684</sup> Somewhat later we find Stanislas together with Nicholas Ervencei in the service of ban Ladislas Egervári.<sup>685</sup> In 1486 Ladislas was member of a prestigious jury in the company of Stephen Csupor, Ladislas Roh and Peter Gudovci.<sup>686</sup>

Both Ladislas and Stanislas died before 1487.<sup>687</sup> Ladislas, who had married Helen Sulyok, widow of Nicholas Gorbonoki,<sup>688</sup> apparently died without surviving heirs, whereas Stanislas left a daughter called Barbara, who married an otherwise unknown local nobleman called Matthias Vecseszlavci (*de Vechezlawcz*).<sup>689</sup> She failed to retain Szvibovc and its appurtenances, however, which were at first donated by king Matthias to Peter Tárnok, captain of Senj, who then sold them to Stephen Doroszlai.<sup>690</sup> It was from him that Benedict Batthyány bought the *castellum* in November 1491,<sup>691</sup> notwithstanding the efforts of the counts of Zagorje, who likewise tried to assert their claims after the death of king Matthias.<sup>692</sup>

We are moving on less solid ground when it comes to arranging into order the disparate bits that are available about the remaining members of the family. The closest kinsman of Ladislas and Stanislas, possibly their uncle, was the Nicholas Ervencei mentioned above, who is referred to several times as a royal man in the 1460s and 1470s.<sup>693</sup> On one occasion the *castellum* of Atak in the county of Zagreb is mentioned as his own,<sup>694</sup> and once he is even called Nicholas Ervencei of Atak.<sup>695</sup> John Ervencei, who occurs in our sources from 1486 onwards, was not his son, however, but that of the other John who had been mentioned together with his brothers in 1439.<sup>696</sup> Likewise frequently designated as a royal man, in 1508 he turns up in the service of George Kanizsai.<sup>697</sup> In 1516 he is attested as *vicecomes* of the county of Körös, a position which in Slavonia seems to have been inferior in terms of prestige even to that

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683 Tringli, "Szlavóniai közgyűlés," 305.

684 MNL OL, DL 33 434.

685 MNL OL, DL 32 833.

686 MNL OL, DL 107 065.

687 MNL OL, DL 102 233 (Stanislas); DL 101 034 (Ladislas).

688 On this marriage see the section on the Gorbonoki family. In 1488, however, his widow is called Elizabeth, but her identity cannot be established. MNL OL, DL 103 946.

689 MNL OL, DL 101 083.

690 MNL OL, DL 103 949.

691 MNL OL, DL 101 129.

692 MNL OL, DL 34 079.

693 MNL OL, DL 106 998 (1465), DF 255 825 (1471), DL 103 843 (1479), DL 100 941 (1480).

694 MNL OL, DF 255 849.

695 MNL OL, DF 255 825.

696 MNL OL, DF 233 469.

697 MNL OL, DF 231 857 (1492), DL 34 323 (1508); MNL OL, DL 25 491.



of the szolgabírák.<sup>698</sup> From a charter issued in 1524 we learn that John pledged most of his possessions to several people,<sup>699</sup> one of which must have been Paul Čavlović, for in 1507 the greatest part of Ervence was in his hands.<sup>700</sup>

John seems to have had two sons, Akacius and Ladislás.<sup>701</sup> Akacius was sent in September 1521 by Paul Kerecsényi, then captain of Slavonia, as one of his envoys to palatine Stephen Bátori.<sup>702</sup> Somewhat more is known about his presumed brother. In 1520–1522 he was castellan of Greben in the service of Francis Batthyány,<sup>703</sup> whereas in 1525 he proceeded as the *familiaris* of Louis Pekri at Buda.<sup>704</sup> Yet he was evidently unable to make enough money by service to buy back his paternal lands, for it was a person called Ambrose Csallóközi who redeemed his portions in Ervence for 600 florins. In return Ladislás Ervencei pledged these same portions to Ambrose and made him his heir in case of his heirless death.<sup>705</sup>

Stephen Ervencei, who is referred to as a *conprovincialis* in the course of an inquisition in 1493,<sup>706</sup> was also the son of John and thus the brother of the younger John. All that is known about him is that he had two sons, Francis called “Sicula” and Gabriel.<sup>707</sup> In August 1525 the latter, together with their kinsmen Akacius and Ladislás, received their ancestral lands from king Louis II by right of new donation.<sup>708</sup> In 1526 Gabriel united his own portions at Ervence with those of Joseph (Josa) Tersek of Gyuretinc (*Gywrethincz*), who was his uterine brother, and the parties completed the agreement with a treaty of mutual inheritance.<sup>709</sup> This Josa/Joseph was *provisor* of the castle of Sztenicsnyak (Steničnjak, CRO) in the service of Ladislás Kanizsai in 1518, and the castellan was John Dragisych of Brezowycza, from the county of Zagreb; the latter’s kinsman, Ladislás, also possessed portions at Ervence.<sup>710</sup> In 1524 Joseph was already castellan of Vasmegyericse, also in the service of the Kanizsai family, and his colleague in the office was precisely Ambrose

698 MNL OL, DL 101 507. In the 1517 tax list we see his widow mentioned: Adamček–Kampuš, *Popisi*, 97.

699 MNL OL, DF 232 671.

700 Adamček–Kampuš, *Popisi*, 29.

701 In fact, only Ladislás was surely the son of John: MNL OL, DF 232 671. Yet in 1525 both of them were told to be the *patruelis* brothers of Francis and Gabriel, which seems to indicate that they were indeed brothers: DF 232 719.

702 MNL OL, DL 25 624: he is referred to as *literatus*.

703 Quittance issued by Francis Batthyány in favour of Ladislás Ervencei, who had restored his castle of Greben: MNL OL, DF 232 576.

704 Vilmos Fraknói, “II. Lajos király számadási könyve 1525. január 12–július 16” [The Account Book of King Louis II from 12 January to 16 July 1525], *Magyar Történelmi Társ.* 2. folyam, 21 (1876): 163 (Erwenczky).

705 MNL OL, DF 232 671.

706 MNL OL, DF 233 293.

707 MNL OL, DF 277 175/577–79 ecw; DF 232 719.

708 MNL OL, DF 232 719.

709 MNL OL, DF 277 175/577–79 ecw.

710 MNL OL, DF 277 042; Adamček–Kampuš, *Popisi*, 97.



Csallóközi of Ervence.<sup>711</sup> In 1528 Ladislas Ervencei received from king Ferdinand the parts of John Bánfi at Derze in the county of Verőce,<sup>712</sup> and was confirmed, together with Francis (“Sicula”), in the family estates in the district of Ervence (among them the market town of Ervence itself) and the three villages belonging to the *castellum* of Atak in the county of Zagreb.<sup>713</sup> It is surely this Ladislas who reappears in 1533 as a *familiaris* of Peter Keglević.<sup>714</sup>

Nothing is known about the person called Ivan who also held portions of Ervence, and the same obscure is the right by which he was entitled to the tax of his lands in 1517.<sup>715</sup> Nor is it possible to identify the Kasztellánfi whose widow is recorded as holding eleven plots at Ervence in 1517.<sup>716</sup> In 1496 a certain Luke Kemenowych of Ervence is mentioned as an abutter at Dubica, but nothing is known about his relationship to the rest of the family.<sup>717</sup>

### 2.2.12. Fánecs(i) of Gordova (Fanch od Grđevca, Fanch(y) de Gordowa)

One of the few families whose settlement in Slavonia can apparently be fixed with precision within the Árpád age; it was the sons of Fánecs, Benedict and Paul who received the estate of Gordova before 1248. The castle which stood there already in 1244 and may even have been erected by the family is a sure sign of their elevated social status. It is, however, still open to dispute whether they were indigenous in Slavonia or wandered there from somewhere else. The hypothesis set forth by Pál Engel, according to which their original settlement region was south of the lake Balaton, is surely wrong, for they acquired all their lands there in the course of the fourteenth century. Since, however, the family’s coat of arms was the same as that used by the Újlaki, and the ancestor of the latter was referred to as *Tót* (Slav), the common origins of the two families may indeed have to be searched for in Slavonia. If it was so, their separation must have occurred very early, for, apart from the common arms, there is absolutely no trace in the sources to show that the two families in fact descended from the same ancestor. The problem, unfortunately, is impossible to be settled with certainty, and will probably remain unresolved in the future.

Whatever the case, the Fánecs family was one of more than local political importance in at least part of the Árpád age. Benedict was ispán of Moson,

711 MNL OL, DL 32 872.

712 MNL OL, Libri regii, vol. 1, 93–94.

713 Ibid., 119.

714 Laszowski, *Monumenta Habsburgica*, vol. II, 163.

715 Adamček–Kampuš, *Popisi*, 97: “Ad rationem notarii idem Iwan pro se recepit.” He is certainly not identical to John *vicecomes*, whose widow is listed in the line that immediately follows.

716 Ibid.

717 MNL OL, DF 255 561.

later that of Trencsén and finally of Vas, and parallelly *magister tavarnicorum* and then judge of the queen's court under Béla IV,<sup>718</sup> but nothing is known about their eventual political activities during the rest of the Árpád era. It was under Charles I that members of the family found again the way leading to the royal court. Fáncs and his sons received from the first Angevin ruler the first possessions of the family in the county of Somogy, and all three sons: John, Ladislás and Paul became members of Louis I's court in the 1340s. In 1343 Ladislás and John were both already knights, whereas Paul was referred to as a court lad (*aule juvenis*).<sup>719</sup> John died in Italy, and Paul became alispán of the distant county of Ung in the late 1340s.<sup>720</sup>

The first years of king Sigismund's reign proved decisive in the history of the family. The son of Paul, Stephen served Stephen Lackfi in Transylvania and eastern Hungary, than followed him to the distant county of Trencsén (Trenčín, SL), and was consequently sentenced for infidelity after the fall of his lord in 1397. Although this time he was accorded royal pardon together with his brother, in 1403 they again chose the wrong side and lapsed anew into infidelity. Their possessions were donated to others, partly to their own kinsmen from the other branch of the family, and some of them at least were even forced to depart and settle in the county of Vas, where Paul had acquired possessions thanks to his marriage with the daughter of another *familiaris* of the Lackfi, Györe Unyani.<sup>721</sup>

The beneficiary of these turbulent years was beyond doubt Ladislás, son of Ladislás, who followed his father in the court and remained faithful to Sigismund in the most critical days. Consequently, he was appointed first as master of the horse and then as ban of Croatia and Slavonia.<sup>722</sup> Although he was soon removed from the banship and held no other office until his death, he nonetheless considerably expanded the material wealth of the family and thereby secured for his descendants a place among the richest families in the region. Between 1403 and 1408 he received a great number of possessions forfeited for infidelity, mainly in the counties of Körös, Somogy and Tolna, and although not all of them could be definitively incorporated into the family patrimony, the size of the latter may as a result well have exceeded 1000 tenant plots.<sup>723</sup>

Among the sons of ban Ladislás, Bartholomew and John were equally members of the royal court and as such belonged to the broader political élite

718 Mór Wertner, "Két Árpádkori országnagy családja" [The Families of Two Barons from the Árpád Age], *Történelmi Társ.*, 1. sor., 22 (1899): 78–84.

719 Norbert C. Tóth, "Vingárti Geréb Péter országbíró ítéletlevele 1498-ból" [A Judgement by Judge Royal Peter Geréb of Vingárt from 1498], *Levéltári Közlemények* 73 (2002): 1–2, 133.

720 On the early history of the family see: Engel, "Néhány erdélyi alvajda," 156; C. Tóth, "Gordovai család," 273–75.

721 Ibid., 274–75.

722 Engel, *Archontológia*, vol. II, 72.

723 C. Tóth, "Gordovai család," 274–75, 285.

of the kingdom.<sup>724</sup> Bartholomew was captivated in the ill-fated Bosnian campaign of 1415,<sup>725</sup> and later his son, Stephen, equally knight of the court, accompanied together with his uncle Ladislas king Sigismund to Nuremberg in 1422,<sup>726</sup> and then with his other uncle, John for the imperial coronation.<sup>727</sup> They also received donations from the ruler, but Sigismund, increasingly parsimonious in his later years, seems to have limited himself to confirming previous grants.<sup>728</sup> In 1439, when king Albert engaged himself to lead a campaign against the Ottomans in the next year, Peter, son of Bartholomew was among the lords who confirmed the solemn charter with their own seals,<sup>729</sup> and he was also present at the diet of April 1444.<sup>730</sup>

The years following the death of king Wladislaw were again critical and almost fatal for the family. The two sons of Bartholomew, Stephen and Peter entered after the death of king Albert the service of the Tallóci brothers and became their castellans in the important castle of Szentgyörgy. Consequently, when count Ulrich of Cilli led in the late autumn of 1445 a campaign to oust the three surviving Tallóci brothers out of Slavonia, Stephen and Peter faced as their castellans the redoubtable mercenary of count Ulrich, John Vitovec. We do not know what exactly happened then, but it seems probable that the family patrimony, Gordova was taken from them while they were engaged in the defence of Szentgyörgyvár. Some members of the family were made prisoner by another *familiaris* of count Ulrich, the Polish Juga (John), and certain possessions were occupied by Nicholas Újlaki. To make things more complicated, Peter Fánics somehow put his hand upon another Cilli castle, Kővár, that he was later forced to hand over according to the peace treaty drafted in January 1447.<sup>731</sup>

Strangely enough, Peter and Stephen Fánics were sentenced as partisans of the counts of Cilli in 1446 and their possessions in the county of Komárom were donated away by governor John Hunyadi.<sup>732</sup> This unexpected turn of

724 Engel, *Archontológia*, vol. II, 72. The third brother, Emeric is titled *magnificus* in 1416: *Zsigmondkori Oklevéltár*, vol. V, no. 1920, and so is Bartholomew: *ibid.*, vol. VI, no. 1130.

725 *Ibid.*, vol. VI, no. 1046.

726 Renáta Skorka ed., *Eberhard Windecke emlékirata Zsigmond királyról és koráról* [The Memoirs of Eberhard Windecke on King Sigismund and his Times] (Budapest: MTA Történettudományi Intézete, 2008), 124.

727 Csukovits, "Nagy utazás," 33.

728 MNL OL, DL 12 696.

729 *Decreta regni 1301–1457*, 306.

730 *Ibid.*, 336.

731 MNL OL, DL 37 615: "item Gordwa assignabitur Petro filio Fanch cum pertinenciis suis, rursus idem Petrus Fanch vicissim castrum Kywar ad manus dominorum comitum Cilie assignet, et quod fratres eorundem (!) Fanch, quos idem Johannes Juga captivos detinet, extromittere libere debeat. Item dominus Johannes de Hwnyad possessiones Petri Fanch, quas dominus Nicolaus de Wylak minus iuste occupavit, ipsi Petro Fanch restituere teneatur." On the events see Pálósfalvi, "Cilleiek és Tallóciak," 80–84.

732 MNL OL, DL 13 933.

events may perhaps find an explanation in the fact that Peter had previously been a castellan of Zalavár, held by that branch of the Rozgonyi family which had remained faithful to young Ladislás V.<sup>733</sup> Yet the social position and the wealth of the family were saved by their cousin, Frank son of Emeric. He joined palatine Ladislás Garai and became his castellan at Csesznek,<sup>734</sup> and this choice opened for him the way to the king. At a time unknown to us he joined the court of king Ladislás and became his knight. In March 1455 he received from the ruler possessions in the county of Somogy,<sup>735</sup> then in May he was confirmed together with all his kinsmen descended from ban Ladislás in all the family possessions in Hungary and Slavonia, the newly built *castellum* at Gordova included.<sup>736</sup> The son of ban Ladislás, John was castellan of Velike in the service of the Maróti family in 1447.<sup>737</sup>

Although the possessions of the family do not seem to have diminished in the years preceding 1458, its political influence receded definitively to a purely local level, and lost in intensity even within Slavonia. Whereas at the Slavonian congregation of 1439 Bartholomew was listed fourth, and in 1471 Frank was still fifth, three years later the son of Peter, Caspar was but eleventh, and in 1478 Nicholas a mere eighteenth. It seems as if the “treasure” of influence accumulated by ban Ladislás and his sons had been exhausted by the death of Frank and could not be bequeathed to the fourth generation. In 1467 Frank was one of the envoys of the Slavonian nobility sent to king Mathias in the matter of the newly appointed prothonotary,<sup>738</sup> but none of his sons, born from Dorothy Velikei,<sup>739</sup> and grandsons seems to have played any role either locally or outside Slavonia. Caspar, who was at Buda in March 1474, perhaps in connection with the negotiations with bishop Oswald,<sup>740</sup> was appointed as viceban by ban Ladislás Egervári after his return to Slavonia at the end of 1490, but seems to have died within less than a year after his appointment.

733 Engel, *Archontológia*, vol. I, 465. In 1512 Peter and Stephen were remembered to have given the castles of Szentgyörgy and Garics into the hands of the king's enemies. Miklós Komjáthy, “A somogyi konvent II. Ulászló-kori oklevelei az országos levéltárban. 6. közlemény” [The Charters of the Convent of Somogy from the Reign of Wladislaw II in the Hungarian National Archives. Sixth Part], in *Somogy Megye Múltjából. Levéltári évkönyv 9*, ed. József Kanyar (Kaposvár: Somogy Megyei Levéltár, 1978), no. 61.

734 Engel, *Archontológia*, vol. I, 294.

735 MNL OL, DL 44 762: his services “tam in regno nostro Bohemie quam etiam in partibus nostris Slesie [...] curiam nostram sequendo.”

736 MNL OL, DL 14 952.

737 Engel, *Archontológia*, vol. I, 456.

738 MNL OL, DF 268 085.

739 MNL OL, DL 88 870.

740 MNL OL, DF 244 385. The talks were scheduled for early April (Pálosfalvi, “Grebeni Hermanfi II,” 297–98). The king was not at Buda in mid-March (Richárd Horváth, *Itineraria regis Matthiae Corvini et reginae Beatricis de Aragonia (1458–[1476]–1490)* (Budapest: MTA Történettudományi Intézet, 2011), 100).

The case of Nicholas Fánics is especially revealing. The son of Stephen, he belonged to that branch of the family which had departed to the county of Vas, and returned to Slavonia later. Yet his social status was seemingly much less exalted than that of his kinsmen. In May 1479 he was designated as a royal man among people of an evidently inferior rank,<sup>741</sup> and the fact that later we find him among the noble jurors active in the county of Körös,<sup>742</sup> several of whom can be shown to have served as *szolgabíró* as well, points in the same direction. It is no surprise, then, that he was sometimes titled simply *nobilis*. In 1495 he was listed as one of the arbitrators in the case between George Kasztellánfi and Francis Beriszló, apparently a sign of social esteem, but it should be remarked that on this occasion the judges were chosen from two clearly distinguishable strata within the nobility, and Nicholas apparently belonged to the lower one.<sup>743</sup>

Despite the evident decline of the family, the daughters of Caspar were married into rich and influential families rooted outside Slavonia. Elizabeth married Francis Csaholyi, from the Káta kindred, the bulk of whose possessions lay in the county of Szatmár. The other daughter, Margaret, became the wife of Peter Butkai (Budkovce, SL), from the Gutkeled kindred, who was ispán of Somogy and acquired through this marriage a good part of the Fánics lands both in Somogy and Slavonia.<sup>744</sup> After the death of Peter these lands were for some time governed by Benedict Batthyány as guardian of the young Catherine (Apollonia) Butkai.<sup>745</sup>

Unfortunately, we are but very incompletely informed about those members of the Fánics of Gordova family who were active in the decades preceding 1526. The problem is, moreover, complicated by the fact that we have two persons called John and two called Francis simultaneously, and the distinction is not always easy. One of the two Johns was surely the son of Nicholas, and he is sometimes referred to as Janko.<sup>746</sup> He had a brother called

741 MNL OL, DL 33 135. Two years later he emerges again as such in the company of Ladislás Kopinci, Ladislás Ervencei and Caspar Csernarekai. DL 33 434.

742 MNL OL, DL 102 235, DL 102 241.

743 MNL OL, DF 231 944.

744 Engel, *Középkori magyar genealógia*, Fánics(i) (gordovai); *ibid.*, Káta nem 7. Csaholyi; *ibid.*, Gütkeled nem 5. Sárvármonostori ág 4. Butkai (folyt.); Peter Butkai *tavernicus*, ispán of Somogy: Kubinyi, "Bárók a királyi tanácsban," 209. Royal *cubicularius* under Matthias: MNL OL, DL 57 790. He is spelled as Bochkay in Adamček–Kampuš, *Popisi*, 7, an error apparently committed by contemporaries as well, such as in 1498: "jobagiones egregii Petri Bochkay de Gordowa" (MNL OL, DL 32 803). Since the Butkai and the Bocskai sprang from the same kindred, and bore very similar names, the confusion is not surprising.

745 MNL OL, DL 22 518.

746 Adamček–Kampuš, *Popisi*, 62. The Briccius Ispan who is referred to as his *sororius* here is evidently identical to the Briccius of Remeteudvar who was the husband of the daughter of Nicholas, called Elizabeth: *Levéltári Közlemények* 3 (1925): 119. He may have served as the castellan of Emeric Török of Enying at Szabadka (Subotica, SRB), a connection easily explainable on account of the growing influence of the Török family in Somogy. See MNL OL, DL 88 931, DL 88 934. In 1507 he is mentioned as Briccius Ispán of Berény (DL 101 805).

Nicholas. The other John seems to have been the son of Frank, whose portions were in the hands of his son called Bartholomew by 1520.<sup>747</sup> It was apparently this John who was alispán of Somogy in 1493,<sup>748</sup> and represented the same county at the diet of 1505.<sup>749</sup> A sure sign of his over-regional prestige is the marriage he contracted with the daughter of another *egregius* nobleman from the distant county of Zemplén, Ladislas Tibai of Nagymihály (Michalovce, SL).<sup>750</sup> As regards the two Francis, one of them was the son of Benedict,<sup>751</sup> and must have lived into a fairly old age; the other was the son of Emeric. Two other members of the family equally turn up in the sources before Mohács: one of them is Lawrence, son of John,<sup>752</sup> presumably the nephew of Nicholas, son of Nicholas, and Peter, the son of Emeric was also alive in 1520.<sup>753</sup> After 1526 we see John, Peter and Francis, whose lands were petitioned by Louis Pekri in 1529.<sup>754</sup> John and Peter, along with their brothers, George, Emeric and Caspar, were the sons of Peter.<sup>755</sup> This John seems to have been the last male member of his kin; in 1536 he was tax collector in the county of Somogy, and three years later alispán of Somogy. In the 1550s he moved to Transylvania (together with his lord, John Török of Enying), his estates consequently being granted away for infidelity.<sup>756</sup> In 1570, however, he bequeathed all his possessions in the counties of Somogy, Verőce, Körös and Pozsega to Francis Török of Enying and to his own daughter, Catherine Fáncsi and her husband.<sup>757</sup> By 1590 the Fáncsi(i) of Gordova had certainly died out on the male line.<sup>758</sup> Those persons who were called Fáncsy and survived right into the seventeenth century, had apparently nothing to do with the Fáncsi(i) of Gordova.<sup>759</sup>

747 Adamček–Kampuš, *Popisi*, 132.

748 Tibor Neumann, “Bátori István politikai szerepe II. Ulászló uralkodása alatt” [The Political Role of Stephen Bátori during the Reign of Wladislaw II], *Szabolcs-Szatmár-Beregi Szemle* 17 (2009): 1, 116, n. 226.

749 MNL OL, DL 22 559.

750 MNL OL, DF 224 101, DF 224 896.

751 MNL OL, DF 277 175/171–73 ecw.

752 Ibid.

753 Adamček–Kampuš, *Popisi*, 132.

754 Laszovski, *Monumenta Habsburgica*, vol. I, 229–30.

755 Arnold Ipolyi, Imre Nagy, and Dezső Véghely, eds., *Hazai Okmánytár (Codex diplomaticus patrius Hung.)*, vol. V of VIII (Győr–Budapest, 1865–1891) 437.

756 József Bessenyei, *Enyingi Török Bálint okmánytára* [Documents relating to Valentine Török of Enying] (Budapest: Magyar Történelmi Társulat, 1994).

757 MNL OL, Libri regii, vol. 3, 978.

758 In April 1590 the daughter of John Fáncsi, Catherine, made an agreement in the name of her cousins, Clara, daughter of George Fáncsi, and Catherine, daughter of Emeric Fáncsi, with a certain Nicholas Bodoni, with a view to recuperating the ancient Fáncs lands in the counties of Somogy, Verőce and Pozsega, which had been alienated by the late John Fáncsi. Zsolt Bogdányi and Emőke Gálfi, eds., *Az erdélyi káptalan jegyzőkönyvei 1222–1599* [The Registers of the Chapter of Transylvania 1222–1599] (Kolozsvár: Erdélyi Múzeum-Egyesület, 2006), no. 703.

759 Pál Engel counted among the Fáncsi(i) of Gordova a certain Urban and his son Caspar, as a fragment as yet unattached to the main genealogy of the family. At first glance he seems to



Among all these persons a third Francis, the son of Nicholas is the only one about whose activities we have some information. In 1523 his kinsmen

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have been right, for this Urban is once referred to as of Gordova. Yet it is certain that he had nothing to do with the Slavonian Fáncsi(i). The reference to Urban Fáncsi as of Gordova in the early sixteenth century, however, proves that the confusion of the two families goes back to the late middle ages. Alongside the name itself, it is the fact that the originally non-Slavonian Fáncsi also came to possess in Slavonia which seems to lay at the root of the problem. In order to avoid further confusion, and because of their settlement in Slavonia, it seemed justified to outline briefly the career of the “other” Fáncsi here. They descended from a Pecheneg (Hung. *Besenyő*) called Matthew who lived in the county of Fejér in the thirteenth century, and received the piece of land called Fáncs from king Béla IV. The family lived in relative obscurity until the last third of the fifteenth century when, presumably thanks to their kinship with the Alapi family, and to the rapid rise of the neighbouring Somi family, they produced a social ascent which must have seemed quite astonishing already to their contemporaries, and presumably accounts for the confusion with the Fáncsi(i) of Gordova. Emeric and Urban Fáncsi were the sons of Barnaby, son of Francis. Emeric started his career in the service of Joseph Somi, ispán of Temes, in the late 1490s. He then went over to another local magnate, Francis Hédervári, whose service, probably in his court at Ozora, ended in Emeric’s marriage to a close female relative of his lord, Bridget Hédervári. Emeric, who received the *egregius* accolade regularly from the early years of the sixteenth century, as did his brother, Urban, served also for some time Benedict Batthyány, royal treasurer, who in 1506 shared with him the prospective ownership of the castle of Tamási and its appurtenances which he himself had received precisely from Francis Hédervári. In 1515 we find Emeric among the *familiares* of ban Peter Beriszló. It is surely this same Emeric who in 1517 acted as tax collector in Slavonia together with Francis Batthyány. Two years later he travelled in the company of Stephen Verbőci to Italy, together with Paul Čavlović with whom he had been listed four years ago in the service of Beriszló. He was also elected among the noble jurors of the royal council from the county of Fejér.

His brother, Urban Fáncsi, is especially conspicuous for his two consecutive marriages. His first wife was Catherine Horváth, the niece of the late Damian Horváth, ban of Slavonia. This marriage was in all probability already due to the career of his brother Emeric. As a result Urban acquired portions in the castle of Litva (Litava, SL) and its belongings in the county of Hont, which, however, he sold in 1511 to archbishop Bakócz and his kinsmen. Urban’s second consort, called Helen Bári, belonged to the Nagylucsei family, and was thus related to bishop Urban and his nephew, Francis Dóci, a person of authority in the Jagiellonian period. It was evidently due to his second marriage that around 1520 he owned part of the estate of Szuhamlaka in the county of Körös. About his career we know considerably less than about that of his brother. In 1517 he is referred to as administrator of the salt chamber at Szolnok. Yet he was evidently esteemed enough to be called by Francis Batthyány, master of the cupbearers, his “special friend,” whereas George Bátori, master of the horse, referred to his own special affinity to Emeric Fáncsi. By the second decade of the sixteenth century the Fáncsi of Fáncs had become rooted in the counties of Somogy and Körös (besides owning land in at least eight villages in those of Fejér and Veszprém), where the estates of the Fáncsi(i) of Gordova lay, and in terms of social prestige they had also come to rival their “namesakes” of a more ancient nobility. It is thus no surprise that a confusion emerged already at the time and survived until our own day. However, it remains a fact that the Fáncsi family which flourished in Upper Hungary after Mohács, and which received an aristocratic title in the seventeenth century, descended from Urban Fáncsi and had absolutely no connection with the Fáncsi(i) of Gordova. For the references see my forthcoming article: Tamás Pálosfalvi, “Besenyők Bozókön, avagy ki volt Fáncsy Borbála, Diósgyőr úrnője?” [Pechenegs at Bozók, or Who Was Barbara Fáncsy, Lady of Diósgyőr?].



had to protest because Francis wanted to donate his portions in the family property to the Dominicans of Verőce. His act of generosity must have been linked to his liberation from Ottoman captivity, which had cost him some of his lands in the county of Pozsega as well.<sup>760</sup> He married the daughter of Sophie, daughter of Francis Megyericsei, whose father was in all probability a member of the Kamarcai family. For in 1527 Francis and his wife, called Catherine, had portions in all the lands which are otherwise attested in the possession of the various branches of the Kamarcai family.<sup>761</sup> In 1522 Bartholomew Fánics(i) stood in the service of the palatine, Stephen Bátori; on account of the immense lands that the Bátori had gathered in Somogy by that time, this connection was only natural.<sup>762</sup>

### 2.2.13. Gereci (de Gerech/Gerecz)

There were two villages called Gerec in the medieval county of Körös.<sup>763</sup> This Gereci family, whose estate lay somewhere along the border of the county of Körös with that of Verőce, descended from Mojs (Majos), who was palatine under king Andrew II.<sup>764</sup> One of his sons, equally called Mojs, belonged to the narrow political élite of the kingdom from 1251 until his death in 1280. He was even appointed as ban of Slavonia in 1272, and he possessed for some time the estate of Izdenc.<sup>765</sup> He died without offspring, however, and the descendants of his brother, Alexander, later only possessed the estate of Gerec in the county of Körös, as well as some villages in that of Tolna, and the village of Kaposfő in Somogy, where a Premonstratensian priory had been founded in the middle of the thirteenth century.<sup>766</sup>

The son and grandsons of Alexander seem to have inherited nothing of the authority of their forbears. In 1323 Alexander, son of Mojs was fighting in Croatia in the service of ban Nicholas Gutkeled, whereas his brother Michael was then serving judge royal Lampert.<sup>767</sup> The son of Alexander, also called

760 MNL OL, DF 277 175/171–73 ecw; DF 277 175/451–53 ecw.

761 Ibid., 322–23 ecw.

762 Norbert C. Tóth, *Politikátörténeti források Bátori István első helytartóságához* [Sources of Political History on the First Lieutenancy of Stephen Bátori] (Budapest: Magyar Országos Levéltár, 2010), 255.

763 For the references see below under the Kristallóci (2) family.

764 Engel, *Középkori magyar genealógia*, Majos rokonsága 1.

765 Ibid., with the note on Majos, which briefly summarises his career.

766 Romhányi, *Kolostorok*, 35. The Benedictine monastery of Bakva, in the county of Verőce, was also founded by the kindred; for the “rich man called Salomon” who established it (see Romhányi, *Kolostorok*, 10) cannot be other than the grandson of Nicholas, brother of palatine Mojs, from whom the Majos of Dáró family descended. The possessions are listed in *Zsigmondkori Oklevéltár*, vol. VIII, no. 507.

767 *Zichy család okmánytára*, vol. I, 238–39.

Mojs, was deputy of Akacius Mikcsfi as ispán of Verőce in the 1370s.<sup>768</sup> In the next generation Nicholas Gereci<sup>769</sup> accompanied king Sigismund for his Bohemian campaign, and in return for his services there he was confirmed together with his kinsmen in his paternal possessions.<sup>770</sup> A year later, however, parts of their possessions in the counties of Tolna and Somogy were given to Nicholas Bocskai and his wife, after they had been sentenced to capital punishment at the banal court.<sup>771</sup> Other portions were pledged to the same Nicholas, presumably also in connection with the banal judgement.<sup>772</sup> Their influence in the county of Somogy seems to have shrunk together with the size of their estates there, whereas in Slavonia they continued to count among the local élite. In 1439 four members of the family, both Nicholas, John and Mojs (Majos) were listed among the leading Slavonian nobility. In 1448 this same Mojs left with governor John Hunyadi for the expedition which was to end with disaster on the fateful plain of Kosovo, and in return for the weapons which he had borrowed from a local nobleman, he was forced to pledge parcels of the family lands in Körös.<sup>773</sup>

None of the three brothers of Mojs seems to have played any role of at least local importance in the region.<sup>774</sup> A certain Martin Gereci, who received as a court *familiaris* the possession called Csicsal in the county of Somogy from king Matthias in 1469, most probably belonged to the same family, although he cannot be attached to any of its branches.<sup>775</sup> Yet by far the most outstanding member of the family was Anthony, son of Sandrin, from the other branch of the family (descended from George, brother of Mojs). He entered the royal court as a simple notary, and after several decades of service there he rose to become prothonotary first of the judge royal, then of the palatine.<sup>776</sup> It seems to have been this Anthony who as early as 1465 provided for a confirmation

768 Engel, *Archontológia*, vol. I, 230.

769 In the charter of donation this Nicholas is referred to as the son of Nicholas, son of Mojs, and his only brother is called Sigismund. Yet in all contemporary documents the sons of Nicholas, son of Mojs are called *Michael* and Sigismund, so the isolated reference of the royal charter should be attributed to a misunderstanding on the part of the chancellery. The genealogical tree prepared by Pál Engel on the basis of the royal donation should be modified accordingly.

770 *Zsigmondkori Oklevéltár*, vol. VIII, no. 507.

771 *Ibid.*, vol. IX, no. 696. The lands in Körös had been estimated for the same purpose four years before: *ibid.*, vol. VI. no. 1465.

772 *Ibid.*, vol. IX, no. 299.

773 Borsa, *Balassa család levéltára*, no. 324.

774 George Gereci was designated as a royal man in 1465: *Levéltári Közlemények* 12 (1934): 139.

775 MNL OL, DL 49 340. The charter has survived in the archives of the Mérey family, which was connected by marriage to the Gereci of Körös/Somogy. See DL 49 357.

776 On his career see György Bónis, *A jogtudó értelmiség a Mohács előtti Magyarországon* [The Juristic Elite in Hungary before 1526], (Budapest: Akadémiai, 1971), 367–68, although he falsely attaches the family to the village called Gerec in the county of Somogy.

of the family's tax-exemption in Slavonia,<sup>777</sup> whereas in 1492 he was confirmed together with his kinsmen in the possession of the monastery of Szentbenedek.<sup>778</sup> Parallel to his service in the court of the judge royal he also seems to have participated in the working of the banal court.<sup>779</sup> Although mostly residing in the court of Buda, he sometimes travelled back to his Slavonian possessions, where he issued charters both in his own name and in the name of his lords.<sup>780</sup> He was prestigious enough to act as an arbitrator between Nicholas Bánfi, master of the doorkeepers, and the Bátori family in 1496.<sup>781</sup> In the same year he headed another jury between the same Nicholas and duke Lawrence Újlaki, and his kinsman, Peter, was one of the arbitrators elected by the duke.<sup>782</sup> It was likewise thanks to his mediation that in 1503 duke Lawrence and Nicholas Dersfi came to an agreement with regard to the possession of the castle of Kaposújvár.<sup>783</sup> He was still alive in 1507, when he received together with his six sons and his other kinsmen the family's remaining possessions in the county of Somogy by right of new donation.<sup>784</sup> It is not surprising that his brother, Mark, was twice listed among the representatives of the Slavonian nobility, and is once attested as a *familiaris* of the Ernuszt family, and so is Anthony, son of Sigismund from the other branch.<sup>785</sup> The daughter of master Anthony was married to Christopher Šubić of Pernya, a nobleman from the county of Zagreb, who also started his career as a notary in the chancery.<sup>786</sup> Peter Gereci, son of John or of Gregory, was in all probability alispán of Zagreb in 1481,<sup>787</sup> and it must have been the same Peter who was listed among the Slavonian nobility at Buda in 1492, although a mere third from the bottom of the list.<sup>788</sup>

777 Stipišić-Šamšalović, *Isprave*, no. 2555. I was unable to find this charter, for with the dating given in the abstract there is no such document in the archives.

778 MNL OL, DL 46 201. The charter was issued upon the relation of a Slavonian-based magnate, Nicholas Bánfi, master of the doorkeepers.

779 In February 1493 he appears as "de sede nostra banali ad id specialiter transmissus homo banalis:" MNL OL, DL 68 716.

780 MNL OL, DF 257 027 (Feb. 1496): letter from Gerec to bishop Oswald of Zagreb; DL 94 292 (July 1498): charter issued at Gerec in the name of Peter Geréb, judge royal.

781 MNL OL, DL 107 480.

782 MNL OL, DL 33 432.

783 MNL OL, DL 88 892.

784 MNL OL, DL 46 792. The *relator* of the charter was Moses Buzlai, master of the court.

785 MNL OL, DF 262 134 (Mark); DF 262 151 (Anthony).

786 MNL OL, DF 257 027.

787 He in fact turns up as *comes* in the charter of proscription issued in February 1481 (Thallóczy-Barabás, *Blagay oklevéltár*, 388). Since, however, both before and after this day it is Peter Bocskai who is attested as ispán of Zagreb, Gereci seems to have been a mere alispán.

788 Uncertainty lays in the fact that Gregory, son of Sigismund also had a son called Peter: MNL OL, DL 46 201.

Among the six sons of master Anthony,<sup>789</sup> born from his wife called Magdalena,<sup>790</sup> Andrew is the only one about whom we have some information: he served John Bánfi of Lendva, who in 1520 apparently appointed him as his castellan of Alsólendva (Lendava, SLO) in the county of Zala.<sup>791</sup> He also served in the chancery for some time,<sup>792</sup> and so did his cousin, Emeric, the son of Mark, who became a notary in the chancery;<sup>793</sup> none of the two seems to have proved able to make a career similar to that of Anthony in the court, however. In 1519 Emeric emerges together with his brother, Urban, as a designated royal man in the county of Körös.<sup>794</sup> Their distant kinsman, Peter, son of Gregory, was at the same time a *familiaris* of the Bátori family in Slavonia, perhaps their *provisor* of the castle lordship of Zdenc.<sup>795</sup> The relationship which linked him to the magnate Bátori must have been quite strong, for his son, Sigismund, was educated by George Bátori himself.<sup>796</sup> In 1499 this Peter and his brother, Nicholas, had received from Wladislaw II by right of new donation the family possessions in Tolna.<sup>797</sup> In 1518 all members of the family then alive were convicted of infidelity because they bullied one of their kin in the cemetery of their parish church. They forfeited their possessions to the Crown, which were consequently donated by the king to John Raveni for his services.<sup>798</sup> It should be noted, however, that this John was the husband of Dorothy, daughter of Peter Gereci, and so the judgement was probably never put into effect.<sup>799</sup> Her brother, Sigismund, married a daughter of Stephen Prasovci, administrator of the estates of the bishopric of Zagreb.<sup>800</sup>

Interestingly, Sylvester Gereci, the one who suffered “lethal wounds” at the hands of his brothers, was apparently still alive in 1526, when his brother, Andrew engaged himself to respect a deal with Francis Batthyány, ban of Slavonia, once agreed to by Sylvester.<sup>801</sup> In 1529 he turns up together with

789 MNL OL, DL 46 792.

790 MNL OL, DF 277 175/329 ecw.

791 MNL OL, DL 36 389: “Misimus illuc hunc egregium Andream de Gerecz familiarem nostrum presencium ostensore pro occupando castro nostro Alsolyndwa.” Among the other sons of master Anthony, Caspar and Sandrin turn up in 1519 with regard to Kaposfő in Somogy (DL 67 890), whereas Bernard emerges in 1520, when he contradicts to the statution of a land in Tolna (DL 30 283).

792 Bónis, *Jogtudó értelmiség*, 406.

793 Ibid., 404.

794 MNL OL, DF 274 994.

795 See his letter from Zdenc to Balthasar Batthyány in 1514 (MNL OL, DL 104 316): he had the right to command the people of Mártonpataka, which, together with Zdenc itself, was at that time in the possession of the Bátori family. Nevertheless, he signed the charter without any title.

796 MNL OL, DL 25 628: “eundem nos educavimus.”

797 MNL OL, DL 46 476.

798 MNL OL, DF 232 489.

799 MNL OL, DF 277 175/551 ecw.

800 Ibid.

801 MNL OL, DL 101 601.

Andrew Gereci, whereas a year later we see Luke and John Gereci as royal men.<sup>802</sup> Anthony Gereci received a royal grant in the county of Zagreb in 1560,<sup>803</sup> and his daughter from Dorothy Kerecsényi married Peter Kasztellánfi.<sup>804</sup> Bartholomew Gereci, perhaps the son of Anthony, was captain of Kanizsa in the late sixteenth century; that he was member of the same family is proved by his possession of Szentbenedek in the county of Somogy, which had been owned by the Gereci already in the first half of the fifteenth century.<sup>805</sup> He also had lands in the county of Zagreb, as did his presumed father, Anthony junior.<sup>806</sup>

### 2.2.15. Grebeni/Batthyány (Grebenski, de Greben/Gereben; Baćani)

The first known members of the family, a person called Gárdony (Gordon) and Mark of the Gárdony kindred (*de genere Gordon*) occur among the “sufficiently noble” (*satis nobiles*) witnesses enumerated in the renowned charter of the Zala *servientes* from 1232.<sup>807</sup> Gárdony is enlisted immediately after ban Buzád from the Hahót kindred and his brother, Michael. Nevertheless, the Gárdony kindred, of which this is the earliest trace, does not seem to have belonged to the most illustrious *genera* of the early medieval Hungarian realm. Attila Zsoldos maintained that they may have been royal servants,<sup>808</sup> whereas János Karácsonyi referred, upon the basis of the names used, to their possible Slav origins.<sup>809</sup>

The first known possessions of the kindred lay in the counties of Zala and Varasd, that is, outside Slavonia.<sup>810</sup> Gárdony had four sons: Gárdony, Ulkoszló (Vukoslav), Béla and Kisemburd. The latter is only once mentioned in 1257, whereas Béla was one of the *fideiussores* of *comes* Michael from the Hahót kindred who appeared before king Béla IV at Vaska (Vaška, CRO) in April 1248.<sup>811</sup> A lot more is known about the remaining two brothers, from whom

802 Laszowski, *Monumenta Habsburgica*, vol. I, 240, 357.

803 MNL OL, Libri regii, vol. 3, 674–75.

804 Maček–Jurković, *Rodoslov plemića*, 216–17.

805 MNL OL, Libri regii, vol. 7, 794–95; Zoltán Dávid, *Az 1598. évi házösszeírás* [The Conscription of Houses from 1598] (Budapest: Központi Statisztikai Hivatal Levéltára, 2001), 357. *Zsigmondkori oklevéltár*, vol. VIII, no. 507; Pálffy, “Kerületi főkapitányok,” 279.

806 Adamček–Kampuš, *Popisi*, 192, 207–08, 351, 360, etc.

807 Karácsonyi, *Magyar nemzetségek*, 452.

808 Attila Zsoldos, *Az Árpádok és alattvalóik. Magyarország története 1301-ig* [The Árpáds and their Subjects. A History of Hungary until 1301] (Debrecen: Csokonai, 1997), 153.

809 Karácsonyi, *Magyar nemzetségek*, 452.

810 Ibid. 1226: The border of the land (*terra*) called Bagata in the county of Zala “*procedens iuxta vineam Gordon*.” Gusztáv Wenzel ed., *Árpádokor Új Okmánytár* [New Collection of Charters of the Árpád Era], vol. VI of 12 (Pest–Budapest: Eggenberger Ferdinánd Akadémiai Könyvtársulás, 1860–1874), 433.

811 Karácsonyi, *Magyar nemzetségek*, 452; 1248: Szentpéteri–Borsa, *Árpád-házi királyok*, no. 877.

the late medieval Grebeni family descended. In 1277 they bought a piece of land at the source of the river Lónya (Lonja) “with a castle standing on the same land”,<sup>812</sup> the latter is certainly to be identified as the castle of Greben, which was accordingly not erected by the Gárdony kindred.<sup>813</sup> Gárdony II also received the estate of Hrascina (Hrašćina, CRO), which constituted a small castle ispánate,<sup>814</sup> and later was integrated into the appurtenances of Greben castle. During the agitated reign of Ladislav IV the two brothers joined the Babonić kindred in their struggle against the Gutkeled and Héder kindreds for dominance over Slavonia. It seems to have been as *familiares* of ban Radoslo that Gárdony and Ulkoszló became castellans of Medvevár and Kemlék respectively. After the accession of king Andrew III their star rose further for some time; both of them ceded the castles of which they were the guardians to the new ruler without resistance, in which they merely followed the example of their lord, ban Radoslo, who at first also supported Andrew III. Moreover, Gárdony II was “among the first” to join the king at Buda, who immediately sent him back to Zagreb “in order to defend the marches of his realm,” and consequently seems to have put him back at the head of the castle of Medve as a royal castellan. Thanks to his services he was confirmed in the possession of Hrascina, and his Slavonian lands were exempted from all taxes due to the king and the ban. At the same time the two brothers preserved their confidential status within the entourage of Radoslo, whom they represented in 1292 among other commissaries sent by the ban for the settlement of his dispute with the bishop of Zagreb. Consequently they both disappear from our sources, although Gárdony II was still castellan of Medvevár in 1302.<sup>815</sup>

Nor do we know anything about the history of the family during the first two decades of the Angevin period. It is certain, however, that the following years proved almost disastrous for the descendants of Gárdony. In 1321 one of the sons of Ulkoszló, Hector became ispán of Körös, presumably in the service of ban John Babonić.<sup>816</sup> In the same year he and his brother, Punik had their tax-exemption confirmed by king Charles I.<sup>817</sup> In December of the next year Hector once again appears in the king’s court at Temesvár.<sup>818</sup> Moreover, Punik joined Mikcs of the Ákos kindred, immediately after the latter’s appointment

812 Smičiklas, *Codex diplomaticus*, vol. VI. 221: “terram [...] in capite fluvii Lona existentem, cum castro in eadem terra existentii.”

813 Pál Engel thought that the future castle of Greben was in fact built by Farkas Zagoriai; he was authorised by king Béla IV to finish his castle in 1247, and the royal permission was transcribed in 1322 upon the request of Punik and Hector from the Gárdony kindred. Engel, *Archontológia*, vol. I, 322.

814 Karácsonyi, *Magyar nemzetségek*, 453; Smičiklas, *Codex diplomaticus*, vol. XI, 268.

815 On the early history of the family see in general Karácsonyi, *Magyar nemzetségek*, 453–54; Szentpéteri-Borsa, *Árpád-házi királyok*, no. 733; Engel, *Archontológia*, vol. I, 366.

816 Engel, *Archontológia*, vol. I, 252.

817 *Anjou-kori Oklevéltár*, vol. VI, no. 863.

818 Karácsonyi, *Magyar nemzetségek*, 454.



as ban of Slavonia in 1325, and became his ispán of Zagreb.<sup>819</sup> Not even this judicious shift of allegiance could save them during the revolt of Stephen Babonić, however. The following events are not clear. Almost sixty years later Peter, the son of Punik maintained that his uncle, Hector had quarreled with his father, and consequently gave his portion in Greben to ban Mikcs. Upon thus entering the castle, Mikcs occupied the half owned by Punik by force.<sup>820</sup> A strife between the brothers seems probable, for, as we have seen, whereas Hector remained faithful to the Babonić kindred, Punik went over to the new “strong man” of king Charles in Slavonia, ban Mikcs. The revolt of Stephen Babonić and his sons was suppressed by Mikcs before November 1326,<sup>821</sup> but it surely did not affect Punik, for he continued to function as ispán of Zagreb in the first half of 1327. Yet later Mikcs was rewarded by the king for taking back the castle of Greben from Punik in a battle in which the ban’s son was wounded.<sup>822</sup>

Whatever happened, the Grebeni lost their castle for some thirty years. During this period it was governed by castellans appointed by the ban,<sup>823</sup> but we do not know where the members of the Grebeni family lived. Nor it is known how they joined the court of king Louis I in the middle of the fourteenth century. Their appearance there would be easier to account for if we could identify Peter with the person bearing the same name who is attested in 1350 as a court lad (*aule iuvenis*) of duke Stephen,<sup>824</sup> but this hypothesis cannot be proved. All we know for sure is that in the late 1350s both brothers entered the service of king Louis I as court lads, and Peter later served his ruler as a court knight for more than twenty years.<sup>825</sup> It seems that Lorand joined the royal court later and left it quite early, presumably in order to govern the family estates. In 1357 it was with reference to the many faithful services of Peter in several military actions, and especially in the Italian campaign at Treviso, that king Louis restored to the brothers the possession of Zamlachya (Zamlače, CRO) in the county of Varasd to be owned by the same right as their castle of Greben;<sup>826</sup> the latter had therefore been given back to them somewhat earlier,

819 Engel, *Archontológia*, vol. I, 257.

820 DL 100 093: “olim Ictor frater uterinus dicti Pwnyk [...] unacum eodem Pwnyk [...] diabolica suggestione ad magnam discordiam devenisset in tantum, ut etiam ipse Ictor pro huiusmodi odii fomite portionem suam in dicto castro habitam magnifico domino quondam Mykch bano regni Sclavonie contulisset.”

821 *Magyarország történeti kronológiája I. A kezdetektől 1526-ig* [The Historical Chronology of Hungary I. From the Beginning to 1526], ed. László Solymosi (Budapest: Akadémiai, 1981), 199.

822 Péter Tóth ed., *A Borsod-Abaúj-Zemplén Megyei Levéltár Miskolcon őrzött középkori oklevelei* [The Medieval Charters of the Archives of Borsod-Abaúj-Zemplén County Preserved at Miskolc] (Miskolc: Borsod-Abaúj-Zemplén Megyei Levéltár, 1990), 30.

823 Engel, *Archontológia*, vol. I, 322.

824 Smičiklas, *Codex diplomaticus*, vol. XI, 607.

825 The data are collected by Engel, *Archontológia*, vol. I, 481, 482.

826 Smičiklas, *Codex diplomaticus*, vol. XII, 402–03.



thanks to the many efforts and fatigues of Peter, as his brother himself admitted in 1360.<sup>827</sup> It was also Peter who obtained the right of high justice for his family,<sup>828</sup> and whose services during the siege of Zara were rewarded by Louis I with a confirmation of the tax-exemption of their estates.<sup>829</sup> The king also confirmed the charter in which Peter's nephew, Paul Zajezdai of Varasd county designated him as his heir in case of his death without offspring,<sup>830</sup> and in 1381 annulled all the charters which had been issued to the detriment of the Grebeni family with reference to the infidelity of Punik.<sup>831</sup>

Master Peter was apparently a man of great influence right until his death sometime after 1381; moreover, he contracted an illustrious marriage by getting the hand of Clara Siklósi from the Kán kindred, daughter of Peter, ispán of Baranya.<sup>832</sup> It is all the more curious that his sons sank into complete obscurity; we do not know what role in this was played by the fact that their maternal kin was sentenced to loss of property in 1387.<sup>833</sup> Whatever the case, the political influence of Peter was inherited by his nephew, Herman son of Lorand. At first we follow the history of this branch, before returning to that, much more obscure, of the descendants of Peter.

He started his career in the service of the counts of Cilli, first as their castellan of Nagykemlék, and later as ispán of Varasd.<sup>834</sup> He took part in the fateful Bosnian campaign of 1415, and was rewarded by king Sigismund with a license to construct a fortification.<sup>835</sup> In the 1410s he gradually acquired the portions of his nephew, Valentine, in the estate of Greben.<sup>836</sup> Later he is attested as the tax collector of ban Denis Marcali.<sup>837</sup> In the spring of 1429 he was present with the king at Pressburg,<sup>838</sup> and so was he in the autumn of 1435, after Sigismund had returned to Hungary; this time he received a tax exemption for some of his estates as a *strenuus miles*, which may show that he was a court knight and thus probably accompanied the king for some of his European journeys.<sup>839</sup> After the death of count Herman he went over to the Tallóci brothers and became ispán of Körös in the service of ban Matko Tallóci. He was probably removed from his office in March 1440, when his lord was

827 Ibid., vol. XIII, 28–29: “per non modicas sui sanguinis effusiones plurimasque expensas et labores non paucos a regia maiestate reoptinuisset seu reinvenisset.”

828 MNL OL, DL 100 093.

829 Smičiklas, *Codex diplomaticus*, vol. XIII, 15–16.

830 Ibid., vol. XIV, 50.

831 MNL OL, DL 100 093.

832 Engel, *Középkori magyar genealógia*, Gárdonyi nem.

833 Remig Békefi, *A pásztói apátság története 1190–1702* [The History of the Abbey of Pásztói] (Budapest: n.p., 1898), 266.

834 Engel, *Archontológia*, vol. II, 88.

835 *Zsigmondkori Oklevéltár*, vol. VI, no. 800.

836 Ibid., vol. VI, nos. 4, 2425, vol. VII, no. 1935.

837 Ibid., vol. IX, nos. 110, 516.

838 MNL OL, DL 100 460.

839 MNL OL, DL 100 507.

deprived of all his dignities by queen Elizabeth. In the ensuing civil war he remained faithful to the Tallóci brothers, and was even appointed as “titular” ispán of Varasd in 1443.<sup>840</sup> His fidelity resulted in the loss (again) of the family castle of Greben.

It was in 1445 that John Vitovec, then mercenary captain of the counts of Cilli, occupied the castle of Greben from its owners.<sup>841</sup> Although after the return of peace to Slavonia governor John Hunyadi intervened with the counts of Cilli on behalf of Herman Grebeni, the castle and its estate remained in the possession of John Vitovec and his sons until 1489. It is probable that after the loss of his castle Herman Grebeni moved to the portions of his wife, Helen Orbonai, at Berivojszentiván. The latter was the daughter of James “the Italian”, presumably a nephew of John, archbishop of Esztergom.<sup>842</sup> From this marriage five sons were born, three of whom died prior to 1445, however. The fourth one, called Stephen, died before 1453, and only the fifth, Ladislás, continued the family.<sup>843</sup>

In 1456 Vitovec forced him to resign his rights concerning the estate of Greben, in return for which he conceded to Ladislás that of Újudvar and the possession of Herisinc. The estate of Újudvar (*Wyudwar*), with a dozen villages and a weekly market pertaining to it, was of a considerable size, and Ladislás Hermannfi accordingly seemed for some time to have acquiesced in his new situation. Very soon, however, he embarked on an expansion which seems unparalleled not only because of the number of surviving sources which report on it. Before 1460 he married Anne Raveni, the daughter of the late Michael, and thus became tutor and stepfather of her son, Michael Latk. In 1468 the latter mortgaged to Ladislás the whole estate of Latkovina/Mogor together with the *castellum* there for the case of his dying heirless. Although not without further challenges to meet, the estate was in fact finally acquired by Hermanfi.

Another notable acquisition was the neighbouring estate of Kristallóc. In 1456 it had been confiscated from its owners, Joseph (Josa) the Turk (Török) and Simon Nagy of Szentmárton, by king Ladislás V in the course of a politically heavily biased process, and donated to John Vitovec.<sup>844</sup> After the death of the latter in 1468, the son of Joseph Török, Ladislás, initiated a lawsuit against the late ban’s sons, and reobtained Kristallóc. The expenses of the process were met by Ladislás Hermanfi, however, and in return the son of Joseph conferred upon him his rights concerning the estate of Kristallóc. In 1481 George and

840 Pálosfalvi, “Cilleiek és Tallóciak,” 54 and n. 46; 62, n. 98.

841 On these events and their background see *ibid.*, 80–84.

842 Engel, *Középkori magyar genealógia*, Lipoveci (de Surdis).

843 Pálosfalvi, “Grebeni Hermanfi,” I, 845. Since in this study and its second part (Pálosfalvi, “Grebeni Hermanfi,” II, 267–313) I have analysed in detail both the life and the political activities of Ladislás Hermanfi, and all the references can be found there, no notes are attached to this brief outline, unless relevant new information is added.

844 Pálosfalvi, “Vitovec János,” 436–39.

William, counts of Zagorje, also resigned their claims to the estate, which thus became definitively the property of Hermanfi. With three *castella* at Kristallóc, Mogor and Újudvar, which he rebuilt sometime before 1490, Ladislav grew again to become one of the major landowners of the county. Moreover, in 1467 he revoked all the legal declarations he had previously made regarding the estate of Greben, and thus kept his claims to the paternal lands alive.

His political career was as agitated and successful as his acquisition of landed wealth. In 1464 he was one of the collectors of the one-florin tax in the county of Zagreb. A year later he and his brother-in-law, Nicholas Kasztellánfi, presented the liberties of the Slavonian nobility to the king for confirmation. In August 1466 he was member of the delegation of the Slavonian nobility which negotiated with bishop Oswald in the presence of the king at Zagreb. In 1467 he received a common donation with Nicholas Csupor, knight of the royal court, at Nagyszombat (Trnava, SL); on this occasion he was titled as deputy master of the horse, that is, he followed his lord, Matthew (Mátyus) Maróti, to the court for some time. On 20 March 1467 he was appointed as Slavonian viceban by ban John Tuz of Lak, the only such document that has come down to us from the period before Mohács. In May 1468 he was one of the Slavonian delegates who were authorised by their peers to appoint the nobles who would then accompany the episcopal tax collectors. He quit the office of viceban together with his lord in the beginning of 1470. After the suppression of the conspiracy of John Vitéz, in September 1471 he was rewarded by king Matthias as one of the “notable” nobles of Slavonia for having prompted his fellow nobles to remain faithful to the ruler.

In 1472 he reappeared as a tax collector, this time in the county of Körös,<sup>845</sup> and in the next year he was appointed for a second time as viceban by John Ernuszt. He left (or was removed) from his office during the summer of 1475 for reasons unknown to us. In 1477 he received from king Matthias a general confirmation of all land acquisitions already completed or to be made in the future. In October of the same year he was member of the Slavonian delegation which complained to the king at Korneuburg about the devastating effects of Ottoman raids. After John Tuz had returned to the royal favour and been appointed as *magister tavarnicorum* by Matthias, Ladislav Hermanfi joined him again as his deputy in that office. In 1481 he was one of the elected jurors at the congregation held by king Matthias for the Slavonian nobility at Zagreb. In 1485 he again was involved in the negotiations with bishop Oswald about the intricate problem of tithe-paying, and sometime at the end of the year he was appointed by the newly installed palatine, Emeric Szapolyai, as his deputy. In the autumn of 1486 he was again drawn on behalf of the Slavonian nobility

845 Alongside the references cited in Pálosfalvi, “Grebeni Hermanfi,” II, 296, see also MNL OL, DF 244 382, a royal mandate which prohibited the Slavonian nobles from suing Hermanfi on grounds of his having exacted unauthorised fines, with the excuse that he had acted upon royal orders.

into the quarrel with the bishop of Zagreb, and at the general assembly held in April 1489 he alone acted as their representative. He prepared his last will in September 1490 and died soon afterwards.<sup>846</sup>

All the landed wealth accumulated by Ladislás Hermanfi devolved upon his adopted son, Balthasar Batthyány, who married his daughter, Catherine.<sup>847</sup> She was presumably born from his first wife, Anne Raveni, and not from the second, Ursula Fánecs, who is first mentioned as Ladislás's wife in the late 1470s. Balthasar Batthyány came from a wealthy noble family in the county of Fejér, and was not a newcomer either in Slavonia or in the Grebeni family.<sup>848</sup> In the beginning of the fifteenth century the Batthyány had possessed for some time the estate of Szentjakab in the county of Körös, whereas the aunt of Balthasar, Margaret, had married Stephen Grebeni.<sup>849</sup> Balthasar himself first appears as a member of the royal court in the mid-1470s, and soon emerged to become member of the tiny court élite upon which the government of king Matthias was increasingly based in the last decade of his reign. In 1479 he was tax collector in Transylvania, two years later assumed the same function in Slavonia, then became castellan of Medvevár, whence he later went over to administer the equally important castle of Kőszeg, and also acted as ispán of the county of Vas for some time. It was as castellan of Kőszeg that he made an oath of fidelity to duke John Corvin, the designated heir of Matthias. In the meantime, however, he remained close to the ruler, and accomplished various missions on his behalf, especially in connection with the Austrian wars.<sup>850</sup>

846 For the detailed references concerning the political career of Ladislás Hermanfi see Pálosfalvi, "Grebeni Hermanfi," II, *passim*. Two charters which skipped my attention at that time are MNL OL, DF 262 120, which proves beyond doubt that he indeed served Maróti for some time, and DF 270 513, the only charter issued by Ladislás as *magister vicethavarnicorum regaliū*.

847 Previously I thought, as did Pál Engel, that the first wife of Balthasar Batthyány, that is, the daughter of Ladislás Hermanfi, was called Helen. The source of the error was the fact that in the 1480s Balthasar is referred to as the son-in-law (*gener*) of Hermanfi, and when his wife turns up in 1485 she is called Helen. Helen, however, is never called the daughter of Ladislás Hermanfi either before or after the death of the latter. Since in January 1491 Helen had already borne three daughters to Balthasar, namely Balthasar junior, George and a daughter called Agnes, and we know from later sources that the mother of Balthasar the younger was Helen Nagylucsei (see below), it is almost certain that the Helen mentioned in 1485 can be identified with her. The only daughter of Ladislás Hermanfi who emerges from the sources is called Catherine, still a *puella* in 1478; she must have been betrothed with Balthasar but presumably died already before or shortly after their marriage, if it took place at all. See, among others, MNL OL, DL 103 841, DL 100 896, DL 101 123.

848 On the early history of the Batthyány family see Rácz, "Egy főnemesi család eredete."

849 Engel, *Középkori magyar genealógia*, Battyáni (Batthyány).

850 On the early career of Balthasar Batthyány see Pálosfalvi, "Grebeni Hermanfi," II, 303–04. It is highly probable that the person called Balthasar who in 1476 figures as royal chamberlain (*cubicularius*) in a charter of king Matthias can also be identified with him: MNL OL, DL 45 666. Tax collector in Transylvania: DL 101 772.

After the death of king Matthias James Székely, who had conquered the castles of the Vitovec brothers upon the late king's orders, restored the castle of Greben to Balthasar Batthyány. This may have played a role in Balthasar's being accused of having taken sides with Maximilian of Habsburg in 1491, Székely being one of the main partisans of the king of the Romans.<sup>851</sup> He was soon acquitted, however, and in 1492 he was already acting as a tax collector in Slavonia together with Peter Bocskai.<sup>852</sup> A year later he was appointed as ban of Jajce and remained in office for two years.<sup>853</sup> This banate was no more regarded then as a baronial post, yet Balthasar was frequently titled *magnificus* both during and for some years after his office-holding.<sup>854</sup> It was also Balthasar who definitively acquired the estate of Garignica with the *castellum* there.<sup>855</sup>

In 1498 he was sent as a royal ambassador to the court of the Polish king John Albert,<sup>856</sup> and in the beginning of the new century he returned to office as ban of Jajce.<sup>857</sup> In 1505 he made a contract with John Ernuszt, by the terms of which he became for the period of one year the general administrator of all the Ernuszt lands belonging to the three fortifications of Szentgyörgyvár, Prodaviz and Kapronca.<sup>858</sup> After the expiry of the contract he again worked as a tax collector in Slavonia,<sup>859</sup> and was parallelly elected as a noble *assessor* of the royal council.<sup>860</sup> Late in 1508 he was appointed as one of the Slavonian vicebans of George Kanizsai and John Ernuszt. He reassumed the same office in 1512 for Emeric Perényi, and played a key role in establishing a compromise between Perényi himself and the widow of the late ban, Andrew Both.<sup>861</sup> Although he was dismissed upon the appointment of Peter Beriszló as ban of Slavonia, in the course of 1515 he returned for the third time alongside Balthasar Alapi, in the service precisely of Beriszló. Notwithstanding his advanced age (he was at that time already in his sixties), in 1518 he was appointed by duke Lawrence Újlaki as deputy judge royal and remained in that office until his death in 1520.<sup>862</sup>

Balthasar married twice, or perhaps three times in the course of his long life.<sup>863</sup> The two sons who came to adulthood, Balthasar junior and Francis,

851 MNL OL, DL 19 718. Cf. DF 255 911.

852 Šišić, *Rukovet*, 337–38.

853 Thallóczy–Horváth, *Jajcza*, CCLXXIII.

854 E.g. MNL OL, DL 106 868, DL 107 100, DL 103 620, DL 104 008, DL 106 876, DL 46 406.

855 MNL OL, DL 101 123.

856 MNL OL, DL 101 792.

857 Thallóczy–Horváth, *Jajcza*, CCLXXIII.

858 MNL OL, DL 102 307.

859 MNL OL, DL 107 946/10–14 ecw.

860 Kubinyi, "Köznemesi ülnökök," 261.

861 On these events see Pálosfalvi, "Bajnai Both András," 289–90.

862 Bónis, *Jogtudó értelmiség*, 358.

863 In fact, Barbara Kállai, referred to in 1514 as once the consort of Balthasar Batthyány (*alias consortis egregii Balthasaris de Batthyán*, MNL OL, DL 89 045), may also have been the wife of the younger Balthasar. Whatever the case, in 1510 she was still the wife of Andrew Szaniszlófi

were born not from the first wife, Catherine Grebeni, but from the second, Helen Nagylucsei.<sup>864</sup> Another son, George, died in infancy, and another boy, Bartholomew, also died young.<sup>865</sup> He also had two daughters, one of whom, called Agnes, married Francis Both of Bajna, whereas the other, Perpetua, became the wife of Nicholas Dersfi of Szerdahely.<sup>866</sup>

The two surviving sons of the elder Balthasar both became members of the royal court; indeed, Francis was brought up together with young Louis II, a relationship which served as a basis for his confidential position within the royal entourage in the years preceding 1526. The younger Balthasar was the less prominent among the two brothers. In 1517 he assisted his brother Francis as tax collector in Slavonia.<sup>867</sup> Three years later he was alone in charge of the collection of the Slavonian tax, however.<sup>868</sup> In 1524 and 1525 he is attested as a royal chamberlain (*cubicularius*),<sup>869</sup> and as such he was one of the elected Slavonian envoys sent to Buda in 1524.<sup>870</sup> In 1509 he betrothed Catherine, the niece of bishop Luke of Zagreb.<sup>871</sup> He died before 31 August 1525, when it was his brother, Francis, who provided for the betrothal of his underage son called Christopher with Magdalena, the daughter of Ladislás Kanizsai.<sup>872</sup>

As for Francis himself, he started his career as royal chamberlain and master of the cupbearers in the separate court of young Louis II as heir to the throne. After the accession of Louis he assumed the same office in the royal court, and was elected among the so-called *decempersone*, that is, those non-magnates who were allowed to equip troops of their own. After the death of ban Peter Beriszló in 1520 it was Francis who occupied his castles and estates in Slavonia for the king. In 1520 he was also governing the bishopric of Eger. In March 1525 he was appointed as ban of Croatia and Slavonia together with John Tahi, but the office of the master of the cupbearers was also reserved for him in case he would be unable to take over effectively the banship. Indeed, as we will see later, none of the two bans was in fact regarded as "regular" locally, and they did not even appoint vicebans of their own. After the death of duke Lawrence Újlaki Francis received from the king the castle of Németújvár (Güssing, AU) and the huge estate that belonged to it in the county of Vas. He participated in the campaign to relieve Jajce, and, having

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of Bátor (DL 88 998), so the marriage with either of the two Balthasar should be put after this year.

864 MNL OL, DL 101 432 (Balthasar); DL 23 358 (Francis).

865 George is mentioned early in 1491 (MNL OL, DL 101 123), but disappeared by August 1492 (DL 103 988).

866 MNL OL, DF 252 258.

867 MNL OL, DL 104 312.

868 MNL OL, DL 104 369, DL 104 375, DL 104 389.

869 József Fögel, *II. Lajos udvartartása 1516–1526* [The Court of Louis II 1516–1526] (Budapest: n.p., 1917), 52.

870 MNL OL, DL 102 338.

871 MNL OL, DF 252 258.

872 MNL OL, DL 24 183.



led the Slavonian troops to the fateful field at Mohács, he commanded in the battle one of the wings of the Hungarian army. He survived the defeat by several decades, and his political star continued to rise in the service of Ferdinand I. He had married a lady-in-waiting of queen Mary, but the couple had no surviving offspring either before or after 1526.<sup>873</sup> The family was continued by the descendants of Christopher, son of Balthasar junior.<sup>874</sup>

We know infinitely less about the other members of the Grebeni family, who remain outside the scope of the Batthyány archives. In 1429 as many as nine male members of the family were enumerated, not counting Herman Grebeni and his sons, as condivisional brothers.<sup>875</sup> Their exact descent throughout the fifteenth century is very problematic, and in most cases the attribution of the individual persons to the various branches is purely hypothetical. The problem is aggravated by the fact that the occupation of the family patrimony of Greben by John Vitovec in 1445 seems to have broken all family ties between the different branches, and subsequently only very limited contacts can be experienced.

Basically, it seems that the various members of the Grebeni family, with the exception of Herman and his sons, can be ordered into three branches. Stephen, son of John, who appears in 1470 together with his son, George, apparently also descended from Lorand, although this piece of information is problematic.<sup>876</sup> It is apparently the same Stephen who was a *familiaris* of John Vitovec before 1463, which shows that he had somehow found a *modus vivendi* with the family's archenemy.<sup>877</sup> The fact that he could retain the estate of Hum, which seems previously to have been one of the appurtenances of Greben castle in the county of Zagreb, points in the same direction. In 1470 he was involved in the administration of the tax, for 3000 florins were robbed from him, previously collected for the royal tax. Stephen presumably had another son as well, called Ladislás, who became parish priest of Kemlék and canon of Zagreb.<sup>878</sup> Both Stephen and George died prior to 1475, when the former's widow, Dorothy, pledged the estates of her late husband in the counties of Körös and Zagreb.<sup>879</sup>

873 The pre-Mohács career of Francis Batthyány is summarised by Zsolt Simon, "A zágrábi pénzverde 1525. évi számadása" [The Accounts of the Mint of Zagreb from 1525], *Századok* 144 (2010): 450, n. 85, with detailed references. On his career after 1526 see András Koltai, *Batthyány Ádám. Egy magyar főúr és udvara a XVII. század közepén* [Ádám Batthyány. A Hungarian Magnate and his Court in the Middle of the Seventeenth Century] (Győr: Egyházmegyei Levéltár, 2012), 40–44.

874 *Ibid.*, 42–43.

875 MNL OL, DL 100 457.

876 MNL OL, DL 106 840 (1470): "Stephani filii Johannis filii Lorandi de Greben ac Georgii filii eiusdem Stephani de eadem Greben." The problem is that we know no son of Lorand called John.

877 MNL OL, DF 233 405.

878 MNL OL, DF 219 375; Lukinović, *Povijesni spomenici*, vol. VII, 500.

879 MNL OL, DF 231 629.

Another branch descended from George, in all probability a grandson of Peter. This George had two sons, Stephen and Ladislás. Absolutely nothing is known about their activities, not even about the possessions where they lived. All we know is that the son of Stephen, called John, was later named of Miketinc, and was a learned man.<sup>880</sup> It is thus very probable that this John is to be identified as the John son of Stephen for whose education Ladislás Hermanfi ordered 100 florins to be paid in his last will.<sup>881</sup> In 1497 and 1502 we meet him as a designated royal man,<sup>882</sup> whereas in 1506 and 1507 he appears as one of the *szolgabírák* in the county of Körös.<sup>883</sup> He was also active as a lawyer of bishop Luke of Zagreb.<sup>884</sup> John married from the Ráskai of Sztubica (Stubica, CRO) family, in the county of Zagreb, and had a son called Balthasar.<sup>885</sup>

The third branch seems also to have descended from Peter. John, son of Nicholas had three sons, Stephen, Ladislás and Paul. In 1452 Stephen and Ladislás as well as their father resigned their rights in the estate of Greben in favour of John Vitovec,<sup>886</sup> which the third brother, Paul, was apparently unwilling to do before 1466.<sup>887</sup> It is this Paul about whom we have at least some information. At first he married the daughter of Matthias Kustyer, and had a daughter borne to him, who was cared for by her grandfather but died young.<sup>888</sup> Next he married the widow of Tulbert of Berstyanóc, called Barbara,<sup>889</sup> both his marriages show that he was closest among his kin to Ladislás Hermanfi in terms of local prestige, and they also seem to have been at least sporadically in contact,<sup>890</sup> but even he was separated from him by a real social abyss. We know from the last will of Ladislás Hermanfi that Paul likewise had a son called John, but he is completely lost from our eyes.

## 2.2.16. Gudovci (od Gudovca, de Gudowch)

Of all the prothonotaries and deputy-prothonotaries of Slavonia<sup>891</sup> it is Peter Gudovci who started from lowest and ended up highest on the social ladder, which is a clear proof of his ambitions and talent. His career demonstrates

880 MNL OL, DF 232 179: "magister Johannes Grebenschyak de Mykethyncz."

881 MNL OL, DL 107 608: "Item Johanni de Greben filio Stephani de eadem Greben pro studio suo continuando lego centum florenos."

882 MNL OL, DF 255 939, DF 255 509.

883 MNL OL, DL 37 783, DL 35 767.

884 MNL OL, DF 252 228.

885 MNL OL, DF 276 804.

886 Csánki, *Körösmegye*, 10.

887 MNL OL, DL 100 758.

888 MNL OL, DF 274 949.

889 MNL OL, DF 231 576; DL 104 564, here falsely called Benigna.

890 MNL OL, DL 100 942, DL 107 608.

891 That is, among those who were indigenous in Slavonia. Later on I will return to the question.

sufficiently what is otherwise known through a number of less perfectly highlighted cases, namely that the ways of upward social mobility leading to the ranks of the regional élite were at least occasionally open to the most talented members of the lowest layers of the nobility, and even to not full-right nobles. Ambition, literacy, a good selection of lords and plenty of good luck were the necessary preconditions of social rise, and the lack of any of these elements could become an insurmountable obstacle.

The father of Peter Gudovci, Thomas of Chernkovc, was a *predialis* of Rojcsa.<sup>892</sup> He is not known to have done anything memorable, but surely had both his sons, Peter and Matthias, educated. Probably the first important step in the career of Peter was to get acquainted with Anthony Gudovci, notary of the counts of Cilli.<sup>893</sup> The exact nature of this relationship is not known, but Peter surely married a female relative of Anthony, called Margaret.<sup>894</sup> It was evidently master Anthony who took the young Peter to the court of count Ulrich, where he also became notary.<sup>895</sup> Moreover, after the childless death of Anthony he inherited the possessions of his late relative, before all the possession of Gudovc; behind the royal grant it is impossible not to see the intercession of count Ulrich. Peter's brother, Matthias, entered the church, and became canon in a number of churches, and later archdeacon of Esztergom and Nógrád, and also notary in the royal chancery.<sup>896</sup> It is worth remarking

892 Smičiklas, *Codex diplomaticus*, vol. XVII, 348: "Petri et Benedicti filiorum Dyonisii de Chernkovch" prediales of Rojcsa. Peter Gudovci is the son of "quondam Thome de Roycha alias de Chernkowcz." MNL OL, DF 231 374. On the *prediales* of Rojcsa see Nógrádi, "Szerdahelyiek," *passim*. See also Gábor Szeberényi, "A rojcsai prediálisok a 13–14. században" [The Prediales of Rovišce in the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries], in *Középkortörténeti tanulmányok* [Studies of Medieval History] 7, ed. Attila Kiss P., Ferenc Piti and György Szabados (Szeged: Szegedi Középkorász Műhely, 2012), 291–311.

893 Notary: MNL OL, DF 231 204. In 1452 his possessions Gudovc and *Bwthchynch* are exempted, upon the petition of the counts of Cilli, by governor John Hunyadi from all tax-paying: DF 231 303, published in Lukinović, *Povijesni spomenici*, vol. VII, 214–15.

894 She was the daughter of Catherine, daughter of Nicholas, son of Gud (MNL OL, DF 231 837). Catherine was also the mother of Lazar Botka of Széplak, that is, the wife of Benedict Botka, from the county of Zala. Lazar and Margaret may have been born from the same father as well, but it is not stated in the charter. Nicholas son of Gud of Klokocsovc is attested as a designated royal man several times (Smičiklas, *Codex diplomaticus*, vol. XVII, 408; Lukinović, *Povijesni spomenici*, vol. V, 241 [here falsely as *filius Seruth!*], 305) It is not known whether this Gud descended from the Gud whose sons participated in the conflict between king Béla IV and his son, Stephen, in the 1260s. See Attila Zsoldos, *Családi ügy. IV. Béla és István ifjabb király viszálya az 1260-as években* [Family affair. The Conflict of King Béla IV and Junior King Stephen in the 1260s] (Budapest: MTA Történettudományi Intézete, 2007), 61.

895 MNL OL, DF 231 374 (1456): "Petro filio quondam Thome de Roycha alias de Chernkowcz notario bani Ulrici," Tkalčić, *Monumenta*, vol. VII, 133 (1457): "Magister Petrus literatus de Gudowcz successor condam magistri Anthonii literati de dicta Gudowcz."

896 MNL OL, DF 283 625: "magister Mathias de Roycha eiusdem Jauriensis ac Vaciensis et Quinqueecclesiensis ecclesiarum canonicus notariusque specialis cancellarie regie;" DF 231 374: "notarius cancellarie Hungarice et archidiaconus Neugradiensis et Strigoniensis." The Matthias Rojcsai who is still in the chancery in 1482 (Bónis, *Jogtudó értelmiség*, 299) seems to

that Peter's close connection to the counts of Cilli caused no break in his career after the young Matthias Hunyadi ascended the Hungarian throne.

Most probably after the assassination of count Ulrich (Nov. 1456) master Peter joined the rising star of the day, John Vitovec. In fact, he had no other choice, for the former mercenary captain of the counts of Cilli was the only person in Slavonia who could guarantee, in return for faithful services, of course, the relative security of a person of Peter's social status. This situation involved evident risks, for Vitovec was for some years a declared enemy of king Matthias. Yet in May 1463 Peter received royal pardon together with his lord and his fellow *familiares*.<sup>897</sup>

The service of count Ulrich and then of John Vitovec paid off well, for master Peter was evidently in no lack of money in the early sixties. Having acquired eight tenant plots sometime during 1460,<sup>898</sup> in March 1461 he paid 140 florins for the possessions of Alsó and Felső Oresya,<sup>899</sup> and a year later a further sum of 80 florins for another portion of land.<sup>900</sup> In September 1462 the possession of Plavnica-szentbenedek was mortgaged to him and Blaise Briga of Jakószerdahely, another *familiaris* of Vitovec, by Anthony Koreni, for 315 florins.<sup>901</sup> No wonder, then, that already in 1461 Peter was referred to as *egregius*, and the title was never denied to him thereafter during his long career. His rapid rise, however, resulted in a peculiar situation, which must have caused some embarrassment to contemporaries as well; for as late as 1471 Peter's mother was still living in the town of Rojcsa, formally as a tenant of the Dersfi family, but evidently enjoying a treatment in keeping with the growing authority of her son.<sup>902</sup>

Despite the fact that Vitovec was pardoned by king Matthias, and only temporarily lost the banate of Slavonia, master Peter seems to have left him and disappears from the sources for some years. When we meet him again, in 1466, he is already in the service of another dominant local power, bishop Oswald of Zagreb, as *vicarius temporalis*.<sup>903</sup> The bishop was one of the leading politicians in the court of king Matthias, together with his kinsman, John Tuz, who was at the same time master of the doorkeepers and ban of Slavonia. In view of the fact that the bishop of Zagreb was the richest landowner in Slavonia, the lay governor of his estates was an important person, and the

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be the same person, although Bónis regards him as probably the nephew of the Matthias who turns up in the 1450s.

897 MNL OL, DF 233 405.

898 Stipišić-Šamšalović, *Ispriave*, no. 2439.

899 MNL OL, DF 231 446.

900 MNL OL, DF 231 455.

901 MNL OL, DF 231 462.

902 In 1471 two servants "provide domine matris magistri Petri de Gwdovcz in dicto oppido Roycha commorantis" are beaten up (MNL OL, DL 17 204). The term *providus* was generally applied to mere peasants.

903 MNL OL, DF 231 516.

position was always filled by illustrious local noblemen. Besides administering the immense episcopal lands, the *vicarius* also acted as judge over the people living there, and played a leading role in gathering the tithe.<sup>904</sup> These were evidently inexhaustable sources of revenue, as the further enrichment of master Peter during his long career proves beyond doubt.

The results of the process can be measured by a charter issued by the chapter of Csázma in 1479, when master Peter was upon a royal order introduced into all the possessions he had thus far acquired by whatever means. The possessions concerned were the portions of George Briga in Hrenno, Paulovc et *Palchepolye*, that of Anthony Horzovai in Oresja, the possession of Ilinc, a part of Bedovelc, upper Klokocsovc with its appurtenances, portions in the neighbouring villages, and the possessions of Tamasovc and Krajetin.<sup>905</sup> Most of these lands belonged to master Peter "*vigore contractus*," that is, he bought them for money. The price is not known, but we are informed by another charter that for a further portion of Klokocsovc Peter paid 275 florins to Stephen Hásságyi.<sup>906</sup> Moreover, the list obviously does not contain the lands mortgaged to Peter, such as Kadalovc, for which he paid 50 florins.<sup>907</sup> All of the new acquisitions seem to have lain in the immediate vicinity of Gudovc, which clearly points at a preconceived plan of estate-building in the central region of the county of Körös.

As an episcopal *vicarius* and well-to-do landowner master Peter soon became an esteemed member of the local noble community. Already in November 1470,<sup>908</sup> and then in March 1478 we find him at Buda,<sup>909</sup> possibly as

904 MNL OL, DF 257 069, DF 268 084.

905 MNL OL, DF 218 987: "*villarum, possessionum porcionumque possessionariarum primo videlicet quondam Georgii Briga de Milethincz in possessionibus Hrenno, Paulowcz et Palchepolye habitatum ipsum magistrum Petrum de Gudowcz vigore certi contractus ut dicitur concernencium, deinde totalis porcionis Oresya vocate per quondam Anthonium filium Jacobi de Horzowa et nobilem dominam Elizabeth vocatam filiam quondam Lacze de Laczowelcz consortem eiusdem Anthonii, deinde similiter totalis possessionis Ily(nc)z alio nomine Wykarusowcz nuncupate per magistros Stephanum Zeld de Ozthopan et Cristoforum de Elyewelgh, deinde totalis porcionis possessionarie in possessione Bedovelcz existentis per nobilem dominam Brigidam relictam quondam Petri Spanych de (...)asnycza alias ipsi magistro Petro de Gudowcz venditarum, deinde possessionis Klokochowcz superioris ac villarum Gorniawez, Podbrezthye, Wragowcz ac porcionis possessionarie in villa Mykulincz ad eandem possessionem superioris Klokochowcz spectancium, deinde totalium porcionum possessionariarum quondam Martini filii olim Emerici Wanczek filii Johannis de Klokochowcz in possessionibus Klokochowcz zenthmiklos, Olywercz et Plavnycza vocatis habitatum per Emericum filium quondam Johannis Z(az) de Thamasowcz dicto magistro Petro de Gudowcz traditarum et assignatarum, deinde possessionum Thamasowcz predictae et Krayeth(in) vocatarum jamfati Emerici Zaz similiter vigore certi contractus dictum magistrum Petrum de Gudowcz concernencium, omnino in predicto regno Sclavonie et comitatu Crisiensi existencium.*"

906 MNL OL, DF 231 680.

907 MNL OL, DF 231 619.

908 MNL OL, DL 102 176.

909 MNL OL, DF 231 680.

one of the envoys sent by the county of Körös to the diet. On both occasions his fellow-envoy was Ladislás Hermanfi of Greben, one of the politically most active members of the Slavonian nobility. Three times (1471, 1474, 1478) he is enlisted among the representatives of the Slavonian noble university. His involvement in the matter of tax-paying is especially interesting in view of the fact that he was at the same time in the bishop's service. This double role was not a rare phenomenon among the Slavonian nobility, who were regarded before all, and without respect to their other engagements, as belonging to the local noble community and bound by their common interests.

Besides his presence at the diet, and his involvement in the negotiations with the bishop concerning the tithe, one of the most solid proofs of master Peter's confidential position among the Slavonian nobility is his relatively frequent occurrence as an arbitrator already before his election as deputy-prothonotary. We have at least three such instances before 1479, and in one case the jury was even held at the residence of Peter at Gudovc.<sup>910</sup> Effective arbitration in cases of disputed property, frequently accompanied by serious acts of violence, required legal knowledge, authority and sensitivity, and the fact that master Peter was frequently invited to settle such cases shows that he was able to meet these expectations. And his successes further increased his authority, opening new fields for his ambitions.

Sometime during 1478 he was elected by his fellow nobles as deputy-prothonotary of Slavonia.<sup>911</sup> From this time on until his death in the mid-nineties his possession of Gudovc functioned as a third administrative capital of Slavonia besides Körös and Zagreb, where litigants and other clients processed in great numbers for documents issued by master Peter in the name of the ban.<sup>912</sup> For some years, however, he also remained episcopal *vicarius*. It was upon the intercession of his lord, bishop Oswald that he received a general confirmation of estates from king Matthias in Olmütz in June 1479.<sup>913</sup> He is last referred to as *vicarius temporalis* in February 1481;<sup>914</sup> his leave from the bishop's service may have been due to the overwhelming administrative burden of his new office, but also to the waning luck of the Tuz family after the congregation of Zagreb. In fact, John Tuz was then forced to exile, and bishop Oswald lost the political influence he had thereto enjoyed. Whatever the reason, master Peter's rise in authority remained unbroken after 1481. Still in 1481, for instance, he was named in the company of the royal attorney, three former vicebans, and Stephen Csopor, one of the richest Slavonian noblemen, as special royal commissioner in the important case of bordering the estates of

910 MNL OL, DL 16 793; *Levéltári Közlemények* 13 (1935): 238; MNL OL, DL 100 851.

911 MNL OL, DL 102 205 (18 September, 1478).

912 On the function of the Slavonian prothonotaries see below p. 361–62.

913 MNL OL, DF 218 977.

914 MNL OL, DF 256 576: "vicepalatinus (!!) regni Sclavonie vicariusque tocius episcopatus Zagradiensis in temporalibus generalis."



the bishopric of Zagreb from the royal castle lordship of Medve.<sup>915</sup> Later on he mediated between the chapter of Zagreb and George Turóci, and it was to master Peter that the latter sent the royal charter which allowed him to alienate or bequeath his lands to whoever he wanted.<sup>916</sup>

Master Peter continued the acquisition of land as intensely as before. In 1482 John, the son of Blaise Briga designated him as heir to his possessions,<sup>917</sup> and, although king Matthias donated these estates to David and Francis Dombai,<sup>918</sup> Peter finally prevailed, apparently by marrying one of his daughters, Catherine, to Francis Dombai. Moreover, in 1487 Dombai, who, as mentioned above, had been sentenced to loss of property, asked the immense sum of 820 florins from his father-in-law, and pledged in return his portions in Gorbonok to him.<sup>919</sup> Master Peter also spent considerable sums of money on buying and leasing land, and contracted some exchanges as well.<sup>920</sup> In September 1483 at Buda he received another general confirmation of his estates from king Matthias, who this time referred to the consent of queen Beatrix also, and donated the royal right as well in all the pieces of property concerned.<sup>921</sup>

Yet by the late 1480s his spectacular rise and apparently unlimited ambition must have seemed irritating enough to provoke resistance. Before all, his appearance at Gorbonok raised the anger of ban Ladislav Egervári, who had his own ambitions of expansion in that region. In the midst of the upheaval which followed the death of king Matthias, Egervári captivated the influential deputy-prothonotary, took him to his castle of Velike, and forced him to give him the castle of Gorbonok together with its appurtenances for the same sum for which Peter had received it from Francis Dombai, but without paying a single florin.<sup>922</sup> It may also have been the ban who accused Gudovci, together with Balthasar Batthyányi and Peter Bocskai, to have joined Maximilian of Habsburg and taken part in the occupation of the castles belonging to the bishopric of Zagreb.<sup>923</sup> Although they finally managed to prove their fidelity to king Wladislaw II, it was apparently for reasons of safety that in 1492 master Peter had Peter Bocskai introduced into his own possessions.<sup>924</sup>

Despite these difficulties, Peter Gudovci remained one of the key figures of the local nobility. In 1490 he was listed third among the Slavonian nobility

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915 MNL OL, DL 37 582.

916 MNL OL, DF 255 848; DF 256 912.

917 MNL OL, DF 231 741.

918 MNL OL, DF 231 744.

919 See the section on the Dombai above.

920 MNL OL, DF 231 745; DF 231 769; DF 255 892; DF 231 789.

921 MNL OL, DF 219 002.

922 MNL OL, DF 231 834.

923 MNL OL, DL 19 718.

924 MNL OL, DF 231 844.

negotiating with bishop Oswald, whereas in March 1492 he came 11th on the common list of the Croatian and Slavonian nobles confirming the Habsburg succession. Having been a member of the Slavonian delegation which bargained with bishop Oswald at Dombró in July 1485,<sup>925</sup> he also participated to the general assemblies held in December 1485 and in June 1490, after the death of king Matthias;<sup>926</sup> we find him in the capital in January 1487,<sup>927</sup> and he was a member of the jury mediating between bishop Oswald and Stephen Csupor in April 1490, likewise at Buda.<sup>928</sup> He was also engaged in the financial administration of Slavonia, evidently profiting from his experiences as an episcopal *vicarius*. In 1492 Stephen Csupor sent him 50 florins “for the defence of the realm,”<sup>929</sup> and in 1495 he was rewarded by the treasurer for the efforts he had made among the Slavonian nobility in order to facilitate the collection of the tax.<sup>930</sup> Sometime before 1488 he was tax collector himself in Slavonia together with Balthasar Batthyány.<sup>931</sup> In March 1494 the king confirmed “according to the old custom” of Slavonia the exemption of the prothonotary from all military duties.<sup>932</sup> In March 1495 at the assembly of Verőce he received further possessions from king Wladislaw, whose former owners either died heirless or lapsed into infidelity.<sup>933</sup>

When in May 1495, shortly before his death, master Peter appeared before the chapter of Csázma, he could look back upon an exceptionally successful career. The former *predialis* was then the respected owner of two *castella* and some two hundred tenant plots. It was with evident pride that he referred to the two thousand florins which he had gathered in the “service and courts of princes and magnates” from his youth until then, and which he had all spent upon the acquisition of land. Lest the fruits of so “tiring and dangerous services” come to nought, he betrothed his son, Stephen with Potenciana, the daughter of Peter Bocskai, who had previously given him a lot of help, and for the case of Stephen’s dying heirless, he pledged all his lands for the said sum to Potenciana Bocskai.<sup>934</sup>

925 MNL OL, DF 268 111.

926 1485: MNL OL, DL 103 911 (charter of ban Matthias Geréb with the seals of the vicebans, a clear indication of master Peter’s presence in the capital); 1490: DF 252 107.

927 MNL OL, DF 268 110.

928 MNL OL, DL 102 244.

929 *Levéltári Közlemények* 13 (1935), 253–57: “Pro tutela regni.”

930 Adamček–Kampuš, *Popisi*, 7: “Ex commissione regie maiestatis bona Petri de Gwdowch propter fatigas quas continue habet inter regnicolas in facto contribucionis sunt relaxata que faciunt flor. 100.”

931 *Ibid.*, 16, dated as “around 1500;” yet the possession of Rakonok by duke Victorin (here rendered as Vutorinus!, but see the original, MNL OL, DL 104 641 for Victorinus) Podiebrad clearly puts it to before 1488, when the duke was deprived of his lands in Slavonia.

932 Kukuljević, *Jura regni*, part II, 228–29.

933 MNL OL, DF 231 953.

934 MNL OL, DF 219 077: “duo milia florenorum auri, que a juventutis sue tempore usque senectutis sue etatem in serviciis et curiis principum et magnatum proficiscendo acquisivisset.”

This measure may have had a preventive edge. For only four month later, master Peter and his son contracted another treaty of inheritance, this time designating chancellor Thomas Bakóc and his relatives as their heirs in the case of both of them dying without heirs of either sex. In the event of Potenciana surviving her husband, she would have thus remained in the possession of all the Gudovci lands by virtue of the charter of pledge. What lay in the background of the disposition made in favour of the omnipotent chancellor and his kin, is impossible to tell; although the prothonotary referred to the many favours made to him by the chancellor, pressure coming from the latter can by no means be excluded.<sup>935</sup>

We do not know which family the second wife of master Peter, called Hedvig, came from,<sup>936</sup> nor can it be established from whom his children were born. We have seen that one of his daughters, Catherine married Francis Dombai, and the other, Lucy contracted an equally good marriage: her husband was Peter, son of James Megyericsei, after whose death master Peter was for some time tutor of his underage sons. Master Peter's only son, Stephen, is a much more obscure figure than his father. Inheriting as he did the possessions and authority of his father, he was constantly titled *egregius*, but was either unwilling or unable to build up a similar career. He was present in the king's campaign late in 1494, and received a small royal grant at Bács,<sup>937</sup> but subsequently we only hear of him in cases of trivial local disputes and acts of violence committed by or against him.<sup>938</sup> One such case almost proved disastrous for him, for in June 1518 king Louis II donated all his possessions to Benedict Batthyány and Peter Lacovich of Butinc by reason of Stephen's infidelity, which he had committed by making his retainers kill a kinsman of the said Peter during the general assembly convoked for St George at Buda.<sup>939</sup> Apparently Stephen Gudovci lost none of his possessions, which thus passed onto his son-in-law, John Pekri.<sup>940</sup> The latter married his only daughter, Elizabeth, who was born either from Potenciana Bocskai or from Stephen's second wife, called Barbara. She belonged to the Laki Kacor family,<sup>941</sup> a rich noble kindred from the county of Zala. Her sister, Susan married George Kerecsényi, and her brother,

935 MNL OL, DL 84 577.

936 It is possible that she descended on the maternal line from the Szencsei family, however, for in 1495 Elizabeth, the daughter of Peter, son of Mihalc is called the *prothawa* of Stephen Gudovci, a relationship which is only possible on the side of his mother, of course: MNL OL, DF 244 487. See also DF 231 904.

937 MNL OL, DF 219 071.

938 Eg. MNL OL, DF 231 186, DF 231 992, DL 102 295.

939 Dezső Szabó, *Magyar országyűlések*, 130–31.

940 MNL OL, DL 25 625.

941 MNL OL, DL 47 328.

Nicholas Kacor, was castellan of Velike in 1512. Stephen Gudovci died shortly before 21 March 1521.<sup>942</sup>

It is worth remarking that in the 1490s we find a canon of Csázma called Nicholas Gudovci, but it is impossible to tell whether he belonged to the family of the deputy prothonotary or was simply born at Gudovc, apparently a populous settlement at that time, and named simply after his birthplace.<sup>943</sup>

### 2.2.17. Hássági (Hašagi, de Hashagh, Hassagh)

The Hássági was a noble family of modest wealth in the county of Zala. In 1513 they were recorded in that county with 48 tenant plots in seven villages, although we do not know which part of them had been in their possession already before the family's rise began in the second half of the fifteenth century.<sup>944</sup> Their record until the third decade of the fifteenth century does not seem to have been a remarkable one; this is at least what can be concluded from their appearance merely as royal men in the charters. Change came with Michael, son of Paul, who rose in the service of the Pető family to become their deputy at the head of the county of Zala and also their castellan at Tátika.<sup>945</sup> The Pető of Gerse, although favoured by king Sigismund, held no baronial office during his reign, which again seems to attest the quite modest origins of the Hássági family. His kinsman, Denis, served for his part the magnate Szécsi family, and likewise functioned as the deputy of John Szécsi in the county of Zala. It is this Denis who laid the foundations for the family's expansion in Slavonia.

He married the daughter of Vitko of Urbanovc (Vrbanovec, CRO) in the neighbouring county of Varasd, and obtained thereby the inheritance of his father-in-law.<sup>946</sup> Urbanovc was listed with 25 tenant plots in 1513, and another estate of similar size, that of Martinyanc (Martijanec, CRO), was also registered as owned by the Hássági then.<sup>947</sup> Denis had four sons from his wife, one of whom, master Stephen, joined the court as a simple notary in the 1460s, and, appointed as prothonotary of the judge royal by John Rozgonyi, held the office until his violent death in 1493. In the course of his long career he

942 MNL OL, DL 25 625 (John Pekri to Ladislav Kanizsai): "quousque in serviciis eiusdem m. vestre illic apud eandem Bude fuisset, egregius quondam Stephanus de Gwdowcz socer meus ab hac vita discessit."

943 MNL OL, DF 231 891, DF 231 953.

944 Csánki, *Történelmi földrajz*, vol. III, 152.

945 Engel, *Archontológia*, vol. II, 96. To be sure, I did not find in the sources cited by Engel the name of his father.

946 MNL OL, DF 255 816.

947 Adamček-Kampuš, *Popisi*, 68. Martinyanc was listed six years before with as many as 75 tenant plots (*ibid.*, 36), and, although the figure in the original reads indeed LXXV (MNL OL, DL 104 188), it is surely an error and should be understood as XXV.

obtained some minor pieces of land in his native county, but a much more important yet only temporary acquisition was the market town of Vasvár (Vas county) which he held in pledge for some time in the 1470s.<sup>948</sup> From his second wife, Catherine Somogyi of Endréd, he had two sons, Bernard and Emeric; yet it was the son of his brother Michael,<sup>949</sup> equally called Emeric, who followed in the footsteps of master Stephen as prothonotary and definitively linked the history of his family with that of Slavonia.<sup>950</sup>

How the Hásságyi acquired their first possessions in the county of Körös is unknown. In 1495 Emeric already possessed Karlovc and Szobotica in the region of Herbortya/Raszinya, the latter together with the Pogány family. This may hint at the existence of a marriage relationship between the two families, which, in view of the fact that the Pogány originally also came from Zala, would be far from surprising. But Emeric Hásságyi also held by 1495 the estate of Kupinno in the region of Cirkvena, which had been donated by king Matthias to Gregory Dersanóci and Peter Gudovci in 1468.<sup>951</sup> Before 1488 Kupinno had been acquired by master Stephen,<sup>952</sup> who had begun his career under Gregory Dersanóci, also prothonotary of the judge royal. Although in 1495 king Wladislaw granted the portion of Kupinno previously held by master Stephen to Peter Gudovci, in 1513 Kupinno was nevertheless listed as being held by the “lords of Hásságy”, and Karlovc in the hands of John, son of Michael, which, on the other hand, shows that the nephews of master Stephen shared the lands in Körös.

Whatever the case, in 1492 Emeric Hásságyi was already considered as belonging to the nobility of Slavonia, and appeared as such on the common list of the Croatian and Slavonian nobility in March of that year. In 1499 he was one of the arbitrators between the chapter of Csázma and John Ernuszt, and in 1505 he was already one of the Slavonian envoys sent to the king;<sup>953</sup> then titled prothonotary (of Slavonia), he may have been elected a year before. He remained in this office until December 1509 at least, although perhaps not without an interruption due to the revolt of Andrew Both.<sup>954</sup> Before 1509 he obtained in the company of his brothers the estate of Bradna together with the

948 The career and acquisitions of master Stephen are summarised by Bónis, *Jogtudó értelmiség*, 275–76, and n. 44.

949 This Michael, alispán of Zala in 1464, also died a violent death before 1482 (MNL OL, DL 67 853).

950 Bónis, *Jogtudó értelmiség*, 373, was already of the opinion that the Slavonian prothonotary was not the son of master Stephen, yet he gives no evidence in favour of this statement. In 1495 master Stephen is said to have died without heirs (MNL OL, DF 231 953).

951 MNL OL, DF 231 633.

952 Adamček–Kampuš, *Popisi*, 16, for the dating see note 995 above (Gudovci).

953 Kukuljević, *Iura regni*, part II, 254–59.

954 Bónis, *Jogtudó értelmiség*, 373, for 1504 and 1507. That he remained in (or returned to) office in 1509 is proved by the banal charters issued at Bradna (MNL OL, DF 255 974, DF 219 175, DF 232 279, DF 255 613), which had been acquired by Emeric in the meantime. See the next note. See also Adamček–Kampuš, *Popisi*, 44, 46.

*castellum* there from Michael Paksi, as a result of which their sphere of interest probably shifted towards the county of Körös, and they certainly owned much more land in Slavonia than they did in their native county of Zala. Emeric disappears from our sources after 1509, but his brothers remained firmly rooted in Slavonia; in 1521 John appears as an arbitrator in the case of the castle of Nagytábor (county of Varasd, Veliki Tabor, CRO) for instance. Denis surely survived Mohács, for he is mentioned in 1531 among the participants of the assembly of Bélavár.<sup>955</sup>

### 2.2.18. Balthasar Hobetić

Balthasar Hobetić of Dobovc was an episcopal *predialis* in the diocese of Zagreb, about whose origins we know nothing. The *predium* after which he was named lay in the province of Ivanić, and Balthasar shared it with at least one brother called George.<sup>956</sup> In 1507 it was listed with altogether 13 tenant plots, 3 of which were held by Balthasar himself.<sup>957</sup> In 1512 a certain master Stephen Hobetić was also listed in the same province, as it seems, and he may have been attached to the chapter of Zagreb; we do not know whether he was related to Balthasar.<sup>958</sup> Anyway, the starting position of the latter was thus at least as unpromising as that of Peter Gudovci, yet in his case we do not know what the initial momentum was that set him on his ascending course. In 1499 he was still referred to as a simple *nobilis*, although at that time he certainly was no more an ordinary *predialis*, for a case before the governors of the bishopric was launched by a letter of citation issued among others by Balthasar Hobetić.<sup>959</sup> In 1513, however, he was already *provisor curie* of Csázma, as such titled *egregius*, and his wife was then the daughter of Nicholas Bevenyőd.

It is impossible to tell what lay behind this marriage. The Bevenyőd (*Bewenyewd*) family had become extinct by 1504, and its inheritance comprised a castle and a *castellum* in the county of Zagreb. In 1517 Balthasar Hobetić received from king Louis II the royal right in the two fortifications and three adjacent possessions, although it is not known whether he in fact took possessions of them or not.<sup>960</sup> In 1515 he was already *administrator proventuum*

955 Šišić, *Acta comitialia*, vol. I, 280, here as Hashazy. Francis Hásságyi received in 1535 for his services the abbey and castle of Zalavár from king Ferdinand (MNL OL, Libri regii, vol. 1, 310). The line of Denis disappeared before 1578 with the heirless death of his grandson, Emeric, son of Emeric (*ibid.*, vol. 4, 121). The whole family seems to have become extinct in the middle of the seventeenth century, when the possessions of John and Emeric Hásságyi in the counties of Zala and Varasd were granted away for *defectus seminis* (*ibid.*, vol. 9, 122–23, and vol. 12, 333–34).

956 MNL OL, DL 36 099.

957 Adamček–Kampuš, *Popisi*, 23.

958 *Ibid.*, 50.

959 MNL OL, DF 252 217.

960 MNL OL, DF 274 934.



of the bishopric of Zagreb, but he also retained his office as *provisor curie* of Csázma. By that year he had acquired portions of Mecsenice, together with George Diakói (*Dyakoy, de Dyakowelge*), who had married the widow of Nicholas Bevenyőd, the mother-in-law of Balthasar.<sup>961</sup> This acquisition was surely connected to the appearance of George Diakói in the estate of Berivojszentiván; perhaps his wife, the widow of Nicholas, belonged to the Berivojszentiváni family.<sup>962</sup> Indeed, the village of Mecsenice seems to have become the residence of Balthasar,<sup>963</sup> and he also possessed seven tenant plots at Szlatina (*Zlathyna*) in the same county of Körös.<sup>964</sup> Interestingly, unlike in the case of Stephen Prasovci, who followed him as *administrator proventuum* at Zagreb, we do not see him buying and taking into pledge several pieces of land, although he remained in office until at least 1520.<sup>965</sup> His authority continued to grow nevertheless, and, having served Peter Erdődi as castellan of Okić for some time,<sup>966</sup> before September 1523 he was elected as deputy prothonotary of Slavonia.<sup>967</sup> He remained in the office for some time after August 1526, then rejoined bishop Simon of Zagreb and became *vicarius temporalis* for the see of Zagreb in the 1530s.<sup>968</sup> Alongside two daughters he had at least three sons, Andrew, Bartholomew and Nicholas, about the fate of whom I know nothing; at least none of them ever appears in the post-Mohács tax-lists.<sup>969</sup>

### 2.2.19. The descendants of Isaac

Four important late medieval families seem to have descended (two on the male line, one on the female one, and a fourth in a more uncertain way) from a person called Isaac, who lived around the turn of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.<sup>970</sup> Isaac was in all probability a castle warrior belonging to the castle of Körös, and a member of the same kin-group to which the famous, albeit

961 MNL OL, DL 101 486. George Diakói is castellan of Raholca (DF 219 225) and of Szenterzsébet (DF 252 236), both owned by duke Lawrence Újlaki. He seems to have begun his career in the service of Job Garai, however, who had given him two villages on the appurtenances of Atyina *pro suis fidelibus serviciis* (DL 88 855).

962 It would not be surprising, since John Bevenyőd also married from the region, his wife being Anne Roh of Dégse.

963 In September 1523 he issues a banal charter a Mecsenice (MNL OL, DL 34 333).

964 Adamček–Kampuš, *Popisi*, 55.

965 MNL OL, DF 219 319.

966 MNL OL, DF 233 324.

967 MNL OL, DF 267 600.

968 Šišić, *Acta comitalia*, vol. I, 114, 118.

969 MNL OL, DF 277 175/ 561–63 ecw.

970 This filiation was already remarked by Mór Wertner, “Az Árpádkori bánok. Meghatározások és helyreigazítások” [The Bans in the Árpád age. Definitions and Corrections], *Századok* 43 (1909):398, although his reconstruction is in need of correction.

quite obscure *comes* Hudina belonged.<sup>971</sup> It is highly probable that the man called Jaxa who was exempted by duke Béla together with Hudina from subjection to the castle of Körös in 1225 was the son of Isaac, and the absence of his brother Junk from the charter is explained by his young age at that time. After the removal of Béla they managed to stay close to duke Coloman, who followed his brother in the government of Slavonia in 1226, and Junk son of Isaac received from him the possessions of *Zlonyn* and *Verbovc* (Vrbovec, CRO) sometime before 1241.<sup>972</sup> In 1244 Jaxa was viceban of Slavonia,<sup>973</sup> and his office-holding then seems to account for the fact that he was later sometimes referred to as ban. His brother Junk was in his turn ispán of Körös in 1260.<sup>974</sup> In 1265 he was one of the three Slavonian noblemen whom king Béla IV designated as partner judges for the ispáns of Rojcsa, and without whose presence the latter were not allowed to sit in judgement over the local *prediales*.<sup>975</sup> Both brothers served king Béla in his western wars: Junk was captivated in Styria, whereas Jaxa died in the battle fought with the duke of Austria. As a reward Junk and his nephew, Peter son of Jaxa received lands pertaining to the castle of Körös in 1266.<sup>976</sup> In 1280 *comes* Junk and his son John were confirmed by king Ladislas IV in the possession of the estates of *Zlonyn* and *Verbovc*, which had previously been temporarily confiscated by the wife of Béla IV.<sup>977</sup> In 1281 comes Junk and his son were referred to as belonging to the kindred of Isaac, and this latter name may have been a corrupted form of Isaac.<sup>978</sup> In 1282 John was ispán of Gerzence (Gračénica, CRO) in the service of queen Elizabeth.<sup>979</sup> He later joined king Andrew III and was rewarded for his faithful services, especially in the king's Austrian war, with the exemption of his Slavonian tenants from tax-paying.<sup>980</sup>

971 Szentpéteri-Borsa, *Árpád-házi királyok*, no. 574. The charter is of dubious authenticity. Whatever the status of Hudina, it is certainly indicative of his prestige that in 1262 king Béla IV dated a charter *apud domum Hudina* (ibid., no. 1284). Megyericse was two hundred thirty years later still remembered to have once belonged to Hudina, for in 1496 the *universitas* of the Slavonian nobility dated their charter at *Megyerechye Hwdine*: MNL OL, DL 104 051.

972 Szentpéteri-Borsa, *Árpád-házi királyok*, no. 762.

973 Ibid., no. 769.

974 Smičiklas, *Codex diplomaticus*, vol. V, 163: "Junk comes Kyrisiensis."

975 Szentpéteri-Borsa, *Árpád-házi királyok*, no. 1432.

976 Ibid., no. 1511.

977 Ibid., no. 3056.

978 Smičiklas, *Codex diplomaticus*, vol. VI, 400: "Comes Junk et Johannes filius eiusdem de genere Isaan (!)"

979 Attila Zsoldos, *Az Árpádok és asszonyaik. A királynéi intézmény az Árpádok korában* [The Árpáds and their Women. The Institution of Queenship in the Age of the Árpáds] (Budapest: MTA Történettudományi Intézete, 2005), 167.

980 Szentpéteri-Borsa, *Árpád-házi királyok*, no. 3929.

19/a. Borotva of Vrbovc/Tersztenice (Britvić od Vrbovca/Trstenica, Borothwa de Thersteniche)

In the Angevin period John, son of John was counted among the most illustrious noblemen of Slavonia. In 1327 it was in the company of members of the Ludbregi, Bocskai, Szencsei, Csupor, Blagaj and Atyinai families that he refused to pay the tithe to the bishop of Zagreb, going as far as to seal their opposition with an oath.<sup>981</sup> Constantly titled (*nobilis*) *magister*,<sup>982</sup> in 1353 he acted as an arbitrator together with James, provost of Zagreb and archdeacon John.<sup>983</sup> In 1359 he obtained confirmation of the charter of king Charles I, who for his part had approved the donation of his predecessor Ladislas IV concerning the possessions of *Zlonyn* and *Verbovc*, by Louis the Great at Visegrád.<sup>984</sup> In 1370 he is referred to as of Dobovc (*de Doboucz*) together with his sons, Emeric and Denis.<sup>985</sup> Among his sons Emeric seems to have stayed in the 1370s in the service of Charles of Durazzo, duke of Dalmatia and Croatia.<sup>986</sup> In 1377 it was his brother Denis who in the name of the entire nobility of Slavonia had the charter of Louis I about the judicial privileges of the Slavonian nobility transcribed at Visegrád.<sup>987</sup> Before 1394 king Sigismund ordered Denis in the company of such leading noblemen as Ladislas and Adam Kasztellánfi, Nelepec Dobrakucsai, Paul Szencsei, Nicholas Kapitánfi and Peter Bocskai to confess under oath what they knew about the role of Philip Csernarekai in the revolt of the Horváti brothers.<sup>988</sup> In 1398 Emeric was one of the arbitrators in a dispute between Paul of Zrin and Stephen of Blagaj.<sup>989</sup>

The next time we meet the sons of John is in 1405, when it appears that they had participated in the revolt against king Sigismund, joined Ladislas of Naples, and their possessions were consequently granted away.<sup>990</sup> In the light of the fact that Emeric had served Charles of Durazzo before, their joining the Neapolitan pretender is easy to understand, although it is conspicuous that shortly before the revolt, in 1402, Emeric received together with his sons lands for his faithful services from bishop Eberhard of Zagreb.<sup>991</sup> Yet there are two more pieces of information in the charter which need to be explained somehow. On the one hand, John son of John is referred to as *Borothwa*, a sobriquet which

981 *Anjoukori Oklevéltár*, vol. XI, 485.

982 *Smičiklas, Codex diplomaticus*, vol. XI, 297, 480, 485, vol. XII, 565.

983 *Ibid.*, vol. XII, 210–11.

984 *Ibid.*, vol. XII, 565.

985 *Ibid.*, vol. XIV, 250–51.

986 *Ibid.*, vol. XV, 108, Emeric also titled “*vir nobilis magister*.”

987 *Ibid.*, vol. XV, 259.

988 *Ibid.*, vol. XVII, 584.

989 *Ibid.*, vol. XVIII, 374. Lukinović, *Povijesni spomenici*, vol. V, 157 (1402): “*strenuus miles magister*.”

990 *Zsigmondkori Oklevéltár*, vol. II/1, no. 3657.

991 Lukinović, *Povijesni spomenici*, vol. V, 157.

turns up for the first time in 1398,<sup>992</sup> and seems to have become a family name thereafter. Unless this was an ironic allusion to his evident longevity, quite rare among the lay nobility in this age,<sup>993</sup> there is no reasonable explanation for the sudden emergence of his nickname. On the other hand, alongside the two sons who had been mentioned in the sources since the late 1350s, namely Denis and Emeric, a third son of John is referred to by the charter of 1405, called Nicholas, who first turns up in 1402.<sup>994</sup> He was evidently much younger than his two brothers, for whereas Denis and Emeric are listed together with their sons, one of whom, Andrew, was surely already of age in 1402,<sup>995</sup> the sons of Nicholas are not mentioned in 1405, and were still minors in 1419.<sup>996</sup>

Whatever the case, the sons of John seem finally to have retained both their lands around Vrbovc and, further off in the region of Fejérkő, the possession of Tersztenice (Trstenice), which they had obtained from Nicholas Pekri through judicial procedure.<sup>997</sup> At Tersztenice a *castellum* is mentioned around the middle of the fifteenth century.<sup>998</sup> They did lose the predium of Fodorovc, however, which Emeric and his sons had received from bishop Eberhard prior to the revolt.<sup>999</sup> The two elder brothers, Denis and Emeric are not mentioned after 1405, whereas Nicholas joined the service of Paul Csupor and became first his alispán of Körös county, then, after the appointment of Csupor as ban of Slavonia in 1412, his viceban.<sup>1000</sup> In all probability he followed his lord to the Bosnian war in 1415 and was captivated together with him. He seems to have been still in captivity in 1419, when his two sons were under the tutelage of their kinsman, Peter Borotva of Tersztenice.<sup>1001</sup> Later he returned to Slavonia, however, for he seems to be identical with the master Nicholas Borotva of Verbovc who is referred to as a royal man in 1424,<sup>1002</sup> and as a notary in the court of the judge royal in the same year.<sup>1003</sup>

Among the sons of Emeric, Andrew is attested as an *officialis* of Albert Nagymihályi, prior of Vrana in 1421.<sup>1004</sup> His nephews, the sons of Ladislás, Barnaby and Michael were accorded a common coat of arms together with Joseph (Josa) the Turk (*Turcus*) of Kristallóc in 1431.<sup>1005</sup> Joseph was a knight of

992 *Zsigmondkori Oklevéltár*, vol. I, no. 5308.

993 *Borotva* (razor) being an allusion to his long beard.

994 *Zsigmondkori Oklevéltár*, vol. II/1, no. 1452.

995 Lukinović, *Povijesni spomenici*, vol. V, 164.

996 *Zsigmondkori Oklevéltár*, vol. VII, no. 23.

997 *Ibid.*, vol. II/1, no. 1452.

998 MNL OL, DF 255 731.

999 Lukinović, *Povijesni spomenici*, vol. V, 341–42.

1000 Engel, *Archontológia*, vol. I, 20.

1001 *Zsigmondkori Oklevéltár*, vol. VII, no. 23.

1002 *Levéltári Közlemények* 7 (1929): 287–88.

1003 *Zsigmondkori Oklevéltár*, vol. XI, no. 867.

1004 *Ibid.*, vol. VIII, no. 777.

1005 Albert Nyáry br., “Krisztallóci Tarkasis Józsa (sic) címere” [The Coat of arms of Józsa Turk of Kristallóc], *Turul* 2 (1884): 156–58.

the court and *ispán* of the Cumans at that time, and Barnaby and Michael were referred to as his friends in the charter of king Sigismund. Barnaby and Michael turn up as *prediales* of Zagreb in 1432,<sup>1006</sup> and later as designated royal men. Among the sons of Barnaby only Nicholas is more than a name to the historian. Yet again, we are facing an extremely difficult problem when trying to distinguish between him and his namesake, the son of George. It is probably the son of Barnaby who in 1468 is attested in the service of Nicholas Dombai, then castellan of Atyina;<sup>1007</sup> in 1476 he may have stood in the service of despot Vuk, owner of the neighbouring estate of Fejérkő.<sup>1008</sup> He is completely lost from sight thereafter, although he was still alive in 1492, when he was designated as a royal man.<sup>1009</sup> His son, Anthony, and his nephew, Nicholas, were also called of Mocsila (*Mochyla*), in the same county of Körös.<sup>1010</sup> Anthony married the sister of Martin (Marcinko), captain and later viceban of duke Corvin.<sup>1011</sup>

The descendants of Andrew, son of Emeric are almost as difficult to grasp through the fragmentary sources we have. Three sons of Andrew emerge in a prohibition from 1450,<sup>1012</sup> and two of them, together with their kinsmen, turn up as designated royal men in 1467.<sup>1013</sup> Indeed, this kind of task seems to have remained the top of their ambitions in the period of king Matthias, an impression reinforced by the appearance of Denis Borotva as elected noble juror of Zagreb county in 1486.<sup>1014</sup> Some minor changes can only be observed after 1490. Sigismund, son of Denis somehow acquired in the early sixteenth century a portion of the estate of Felsősztribica (Donja Stubica, CRO) in the county of Zagreb and was consequently named after it.<sup>1015</sup> Already in 1495 he pledged, together with his kinsmen Stephen, Nicholas, Andrew and George, their ancient lands at Sabnica (Sveti Ivan Žabno, CRO) and Kopinno, to Peter Mikcsec for the considerable sum of 700 florins.<sup>1016</sup> In 1516 he was mentioned

1006 MNL OL, DF 252 421: "Michael et Barnabas filii Ladislai dicti Borothis prediales de villa beate Marie virginis prope Warosd."

1007 MNL OL, DF 255 801.

1008 MNL OL, DL 74 528.

1009 MNL OL, DF 231 857.

1010 MNL OL, DF 232 660 (1523); DF 231 928 (1495).

1011 MNL OL, DF 232 533.

1012 MNL OL, DF 219 051 (1450): "Ladislaus, Dyonisius et Janko filii quondam Andree Brythwycz." This seems to be the first appearance of the Slavic form of their name.

1013 MNL OL, 256 910 (1467): "Michael, Dyonisius, Andreas vel Janko dicti Borothis de Wrbovcz."

1014 MNL OL, DL 35 720.

1015 MNL OL, DL 104 011: "Sigismundus Borothis de Vrboucz et de Zthobycza." In fact, it should have been his father, Denis, who acquired parts of Sztubica, which would account for his election as noble juror in Zagreb county. Accordingly, the Janko whose widow also holds parts of Sztubica in 1507 seems to be the brother of Denis, also called Janko in our sources. Adamček-Kampuš, *Popisi*, 17.

1016 MNL OL, DF 231 943.

among the *familiares* of margrave George of Brandenburg.<sup>1017</sup> We do not know whose son was the Paul Borotva of Felsőszhtubica who served Peter Beriszló and received from him a *predium* on the appurtenances of Bozsjákó in 1516.<sup>1018</sup> A little more is known about John, son of John. In 1512 he was castellan of Szentlőrinc in the service of Ladislás Várdai and Louis Pekri, who then governed the estates of the young Wolfgang (Farkas) Szencsei.<sup>1019</sup> Somewhat later he shifted his allegiance and joined margrave George who appointed him as his castellan of Lukavec.<sup>1020</sup> For the rest, all members of the family were regularly designated as royal (or banal) men, but this surely cannot be regarded as the mark of an elevated social position.

As for the branch of viceban Nicholas, it seems to have disappeared in the second half of the fifteenth century. One of his sons, George was tax collector in Slavonia in 1443,<sup>1021</sup> and was designated as a lawyer four years later,<sup>1022</sup> and as a royal man in 1449, but no further information is available about his career. In 1446 he is attested together with his brother Ladislás as holding in pledge the possession of Mecsenice in the vicinity of Tersztenice.<sup>1023</sup> This Ladislás also obtained parts of Mindszent, likewise in the county of Körös, through his marriage with the daughter of Thomas Mindszenti.<sup>1024</sup> Yet when in 1465 the family received from king Matthias a confirmation of their estates, only Michael, son of Ladislás, the sons of Barnaby: Nicholas, Emeric and Andrew, and the sons of the other Andrew: Denis, Ladislás and another Ladislás were listed in the charter. We do know, however, that George also had a son called Nicholas. Since the estate of Tersztenice, with the *castellum* there, was in the hands of the descendants of viceban Nicholas to the exclusion of the other branches of the family, and they seem consequently to have enjoyed more authority locally, it is with some probability that we attach to this Nicholas, son of George, those pieces of information which indeed reflect this prominence. In 1473 he is attested as an arbitrator in the company of such leading figures of the local nobility as Ladislás Hermanfi and Ladislás Ervencei,<sup>1025</sup> and on two occasions (1474, 1478) we find him among the representatives of the Slavonian nobility. He may have been still alive in 1495.<sup>1026</sup> Apparently both this Nicholas and his uncle, Ladislás, died without offspring. In 1507 the estate of Tersztenice was listed in the hands of a certain

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1017 MNL OL, DL 37 580.

1018 MNL OL, DF 219 282.

1019 MNL OL, DF 255 568.

1020 MNL OL, DL 37 580.

1021 *Zichy család okmánytára*, vol. IX, 59.

1022 MNL OL, DL 103 605.

1023 MNL OL, DF 218 776.

1024 MNL OL, DL 94 202. This Thomas, son of Nicholas, was szolgabíró of Körös in 1411 (*Zsigmondkori Oklevéltár*, vol. III, no. 235).

1025 *Levéltári Közlemények* 13 (1935): 238.

1026 Adamček-Kampuš, *Popisi*, 10.



Nicholas, and in 1517 in those of Ladislás,<sup>1027</sup> probably from the other branches of the family which had inherited the estate in the meantime. Several members of the populous family are attested in the counties of both Körös and Zagreb after 1526.<sup>1028</sup>

#### 19/b. Raveni (Ravenski, de Rawen)

The descent of the late medieval Raveni (Raven, CRO) family, to which the famous prothonotary Michael belonged, is one of the most intricate problems and can only be partially solved. The persons bearing the name Raveni are exceptionally numerous, and, although the affinity between the various branches of the family and their lands is, as we will see later, evident, its exact nature cannot always be discovered. The first member of the family to call himself of Raven was Paul, son of James, and great-grandson of Jaxa “ban”.<sup>1029</sup> In the 1370s he was suing Nicholas, son of Paul and great-grandson of Junk for the possession of *Zlonyn* which had been given to their ancestors by duke Coloman.<sup>1030</sup> Paul had five sons: John, Michael, Peter, Denis and Nicholas.<sup>1031</sup> Peter and Denis seem to have disappeared by 1367, whereas Michael died before 1374. The remaining two, John and Nicholas had no children of either sex in 1376,<sup>1032</sup> but later on both of them fathered sons.<sup>1033</sup> Paul also had a daughter, Margaret, who married John, son of Fabian of *Sydynna*, who later also called himself of Raven, and became the notary of ban Nicholas Szécsi. In 1408 the two great-grandsons of James paid the filial quarter to the sons of John Adamovci, otherwise also called of Raven, from their possessions called Raven, Mokrica and Szentlászló.<sup>1034</sup> It would be tempting to identify this Michael with the future master Michael, prothonotary of the seat of Körös, but this identification is excluded by a charter of 1425.<sup>1035</sup> It is equally impossible to identify master Michael with two further persons bearing the same name and belonging to the same kin-group: one of them, Michael son of

1027 Ibid., 30, 98.

1028 Ibid., 141, 144, 154, 160, 165, etc.

1029 Smičiklas, *Codex diplomaticus*, vol. XIV, 42–43; *ibid.*, vol. XV, 10–12: “Paulus filius Jacobi filii Petri filii condam Jaxa bani.”

1030 Ibid., vol. XV, 10–12.

1031 Ibid., vol. XI, 583–84: John, Michael, Peter and Denis prohibit their father from the alienation of the land called *Takachfeulde*; *ibid.*, vol. XIV, 42–43: Nicholas, John and Michael.

1032 Ibid., vol. XV, 224: “Johannes et Nicolaus filii Pauli filii Jacobi de Raven prolibus utriusque sexus [...] destituti.”

1033 Pongrácz Sörös, “A Pannonhalmán őrzött Guary-levéltár Mátyás-kori kiadatlan iratai” [The Unpublished Charters of the Guary Archives from the Age of Matthias at Pannonhalm], *Történelmi Társaság, 2. sor.*, 1910: 415 [1408]; MNL OL, DF 231 054 (1425): “Petri filii Johannis filii Pauli ac Michaelis et Ladislai filiorum Nicolai filii dicti Pauli de eadem” (Raven).

1034 Sörös, “Guary levéltár,” 415.

1035 In 1425 master Michael receives from the king the lands of Michael, son of Nicholas as well: MNL OL, DF 231 054.

John called Kazmer of Adamovc and Raven, who was szolgabíró of Körös county in 1418; the other, Michael son of Fabian called Kengel of the same Raven.<sup>1036</sup> The core of the problem lays in the fact that the name of the father of the future prothonotary is never mentioned in the surviving charters, so the identification is bound to remain uncertain. It is nevertheless possible and even probable that master Michael was a newcomer in Slavonia, as were the members of the Selypi of Raven family, who, as we will see below, came from a village in Abaúj county sometime during the Angevin era.

Another approach seems more promising, however. The Stefanovci family equally descended from Jaxa, and was occasionally also called Cirkvenai.<sup>1037</sup> In 1404 Nicholas Stefanovci, whose son Fabian had been killed allegedly by Miksec son of John,<sup>1038</sup> bequeathed his portions to the sons of Emeric Szentpéteri, Stephen and John. The latter two were then *prediales* of the bishopric of Zagreb, and were consequently also called of Stefanovc and Raven.<sup>1039</sup> The possession whence they took their name, Orehovcszentpéter (Orehovec, CRO), also belonged to the kin-group descended from Isaac, yet their descent from either of his sons cannot be proved. Nevertheless, the Szentpéteri family was beyond doubt part of the Isaac kin-group.<sup>1040</sup> It is thus probable that it was thanks to his marriage with one of the daughters of Lawrence Szentpéteri that Stephen and his brother acquired portions in Raven and the neighbouring possessions. The other daughter of Lawrence, called Helen, became the wife of master Michael, prothonotary of the seat of Körös, and in 1417 Stephen and John handed over the fourth part of all their estates to Michael. This act seems to be the origin of master Michael's land ownership in Raven.<sup>1041</sup> In fact, all the persons called Raveni who played a role worthy of mention in the late middle ages descended from Stephen, son of Emeric and from master Michael.

As soon as he had installed himself in Raven, master Michael set about the work of rounding out his possessions there. In February 1418 he took into pledge a portion of an estate in the middle of lands belonging to conditional nobles,<sup>1042</sup> whereas two months later he was confirmed together with the sons of Peter Zádori in the portions of Dominic son of Beke in the possessions of Dobovc and Sabnica.<sup>1043</sup> Still in the same year he and his brothers-in-law,

1036 Master Michael never bears any of these names (Kazmer or Kengel), nor do his offspring. The memory of the family lives on in the name of the village called Kengyelovc/Kendelovec.

1037 Stipišić-Šamšalović, *Ispgrave*, no. 1236 (1401).

1038 Ibid., nos. 1239, 1243, 1250.

1039 MNL OL, DF 231 474.

1040 Smičiklas, *Codex diplomaticus*, vol. XVII, 190–91: the Stefanovci and the Szentpéteri divide the possessions of Gesztenovc and Szentpéter.

1041 Sörös, "Guay levéltár," 418. It appears, in fact, that master Michael received the quarter of his wife in land, in which case he may not even have been of noble birth.

1042 *Zsigmondkori Oklevéltár*, vol. VI, no. 1451.

1043 Ibid., vol. VI, no. 1733. The four sons of Peter of Zádorfalva received their portions at Dobovc and Sabnica in November 1403: MNL OL, DF 230 835.

Stephen and John Raveni tried to occupy the portions of Nicholas and Paul Cirkvenai as well, but the latter seem to have intervened with success.<sup>1044</sup> Prothonotary of the seat of Körös since 1417,<sup>1045</sup> sometime before 1420 he joined the court of king Sigismund as a notary<sup>1046</sup> and remained a member thereof until his death. In March 1421 he received a coat of arms from the king in the Moravian town of Znaim (Znojmo, CZ),<sup>1047</sup> whereas in July in Pressburg he was given the royal right in two possessions in Körös county which had escheated to the crown for infidelity.<sup>1048</sup> In 1423 at Kassa he asked king Sigismund to confirm him and all members of the Raveni family<sup>1049</sup> in the possession of Ravenszentlászló, and in the same year he obtained confirmation of the tax exemption of his lands.<sup>1050</sup>

His influence and thus the possibilities of land acquisition further increased after he had become a royal attorney (*procurator regius*) sometime before 1425.<sup>1051</sup> In that year at Nagyszombat he was donated by king Sigismund the very portions of his relatives, Nicholas Selypi of Raven and his son George, as well as those of Peter, Michael and Ladislás, grandsons of Paul son of James, who had all lapsed into infidelity.<sup>1052</sup> At the same time he also received a piece of land which had previously belonged to a castle warrior of Gerzence.<sup>1053</sup> Four years later he obtained from the king a license to hold on his possession of Sabnica/Bablyak a weekly market on each Monday and two annual fairs on the festivities of Saints George and Peter in Chains.<sup>1054</sup> In 1430 he once again petitioned and received a land laying among those of the castle nobility of Körös. He was careful enough, however, to have his lands which had thus far been subjected to the conditional services due to the king and the ban of Slavonia exempted from these burdens.<sup>1055</sup> Moreover, it was upon the request of John Ostfi of Herbortya and master Michael that Sigismund exempted the lands of the castle nobility belonging to the castle of Kemlék from their hereditary services and adopted them among the full-right

1044 *Zsigmondkori Oklevéltár*, vol. VI, no. 1949.

1045 On 10 July 1417 he is already prothonotary: *ibid.*, no. 664.

1046 Bónis, *Jogtudó értelmiség*, 133.

1047 *Zsigmondkori Oklevéltár*, vol. VIII, no. 339.

1048 *Ibid.*, no. 810: *Ramachawelge et Precoversye*, in the district of Gerzence.

1049 The sons of Emeric Szentpéteri: Stephen and John, the son of Nicholas Selypi: George, the two surviving grandsons of Paul Raveni and Paul, the son of Fabian Stefanovci (*Zsigmondkori Oklevéltár*, vol. X, no. 710).

1050 *Ibid.*, no. 862.

1051 On his career as a royal attorney see Bónis, *Jogtudó értelmiség*, 133.

1052 MNL OL, DF 231 053; DF 231 054.

1053 MNL OL, DF 231 058.

1054 MNL OL, DF 231 089. In 1518 a fair is mentioned at Sabnicaszentiván, but on the festivity of John, patron saint of the local parish church: DL 105 675.

1055 MNL OL, DF 231 098.

nobility.<sup>1056</sup> Nevertheless, despite his influence at court, his material resources seem to have remained limited; for in order to secure for himself the lands of the Selypi family outside Slavonia, namely in the counties of Nógrád and Heves, he had to ally himself with a “colleague”, master Clement Tapán of Haraszt, who would later become his successor as prothonotary of the seat of Körös, and who engaged himself to secure real possession of the lands concerned at his own expenses in return for an eventual partition of them.<sup>1057</sup>

After 1430 we do not hear of further acquisitions, although the political authority of master Michael by no means diminished. Quite to the contrary, he seems to have become a close collaborator of Stephen Aranyi, one of the key figures of the government of emperor Sigismund in the last years of his reign, whom he assisted in cases of prime political importance.<sup>1058</sup> His removal from the seat of Körös was probably linked to the death of ban Hermann of Cilli in October 1435 and the consequent takeover of the Tallóci brothers in Slavonia.<sup>1059</sup> Yet he remained in royal service even after the death of emperor Sigismund, under his two successors Albert and Wladislaw I. He died sometime after 1441.

By the time of his death the estate of Raven, with some 40 inhabited tenant plots on its belongings,<sup>1060</sup> was in the exclusive possession of his two sons, Stephen and Emeric and in those of Martin, son of the other Stephen. Yet, as far as it can be reconstructed from later tax registers, the latter possessed a considerably bigger portion than the children of master Michael, and, strangely enough, the social prestige of his descendants likewise outweighed that of the sons and grandson of the influential prothonotary.

Both Martin, the only son of Stephen, and Stephen, the son of master Michael inherited some of the legal authority enjoyed by the latter. In 1452 the sons of Michael, Stephen and Emeric were designated royal men,<sup>1061</sup> whereas in December 1457 Martin was one of the special judges elected by the Slavonian

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1056 MNL OL, DF 233 120: “consideratis[...] fidelitatibus et fidelium servicionum gratuitis meritis et acceptis complacenciis fidelium suorum nobilium Johannis filii Ost de Herborthya et magistri Michaelis de Raven causarum suarum procuratoris et sedis Crisiensis prothonotarii[...] supplicacionibusque eorundem per ipsos culmini suo in personis et nobilium nominibus universorum castri Maioris Kemlek devote oblatis exauditis et admissis.”

1057 MNL OL, DF 230 548.

1058 Bónis, *Jogtudó értelmiség*, 133.

1059 He was sometimes called the notary of count Hermann of Cilli, although this of course does not necessarily mean personal dependence. In 1439, however, the nobility of Slavonia complained to their new ban, Matko Tallóci, that his predecessors, encroaching upon their privilege of electing freely their prothonotary, appointed the latter without any consultation. This complaint evidently concerned Hermann of Cilli and, consequently, master Michael Raveni. Kukuljević, *Jura regni*, part II, 199–200.

1060 Adamček–Kampuš, *Popisi*, 15.

1061 MNL OL, DL 103 627: “Stephanus et Emericus de alia Rawen,” so as to distinguish their possession from that of Nicholas Kengel of Raven.

nobility.<sup>1062</sup> In 1459 Martin and Stephen Raveni were entrusted by ban Vitovec with a special legal mission.<sup>1063</sup> In 1461 Martin was one of the arbitrators in the case between Ladislás Hermanfi and the Raveni brothers themselves.<sup>1064</sup> Stephen was elected at least three times as *szolgabíró* of the county of Körös between 1464 and 1477.<sup>1065</sup> In 1474 all three were listed among the representatives of the Slavonian nobility, interestingly enough, Martin and Emeric together, and Stephen separately. In 1467 Martin acted as a royal man at the introduction of the duke of Saint Sava into the castellany of the two Kemlék,<sup>1066</sup> whereas in 1481 he was elected as one of the noble jurors for the county of Körös.<sup>1067</sup>

Among the sons of Martin, Ladislás entered the church and became parish priest of the church of Saint Ladislás at Raveni itself. His brother, Michael, was killed by John Tuz and his adherents for reasons unknown to us.<sup>1068</sup> His other brother, Francis, likewise seems to have remained within the boundaries of his native region, but he was nevertheless sometimes accorded the *egregius* title.<sup>1069</sup> All we know about him is that in the 1490s he was occasionally designated as a royal man.<sup>1070</sup> He married the daughter of Valentine Pálfi of Szentmihály, called Veronica,<sup>1071</sup> who bore him three sons, Joseph, John and Michael. In 1503 the three brothers received from king Wladislaw II, for services unspecified, the right of high justice on their lands.<sup>1072</sup> In 1518 the services of John Raveni were rewarded by the king with some of the possessions of the Gereci family, confiscated for infidelity.<sup>1073</sup> In the early 1520s John was special notary and secretary of ban John of Corbavia (Ivan Krbavski), and proceeded together with viceban Paul Kerecsényi in the important matter of the planned purchase by the ban of some castles in Varasd from margrave George of Brandenburg.<sup>1074</sup> He married Dorothy, daughter of

1062 MNL OL, DL 15 201: “Martinus filius Stephani litterati de Rawen et Demetrius litteratus de Nemes necnon Nicolaus Michech de Chirkvena iudex nobilium comitatus Crisiensis iudices scilicet ad infrascriptam novam dispositionem pridem per universitatem nobilium regni Sclavonie deputati et electi.”

1063 MNL OL, DL 103 664.

1064 MNL OL, DF 231 474.

1065 1464 (MNL OL, DL 35 646, DL 35 098); 1469–1470 (DF 256 696, DL 107 008); 1474–1477 (DL 103 765, DL 107 029). I only indicate the charters with the first and last mention for each period.

1066 MNL OL, DF 233 461.

1067 Tringli, “Szlavóniai közgyűlés,” 314.

1068 MNL OL, DF 255 855: “discretus Ladislaus filius Martini de Rawen plebanus ecclesie beati Ladislai de eadem,” quitance for John Tuz.

1069 Sörös, “Guary levéltár,” 411.

1070 MNL OL, DF 255 533.

1071 MNL OL, DF 232 021.

1072 MNL OL, DF 232 116.

1073 MNL OL, DF 232 489.

1074 MNL OL, DF 267 606: “Johannes de Raven notarius spectabilis et magnifici domini Johannis Torquati comitis Corbavie bani Croacie;” DF 267 607: “Johannes de Raven secretarius domini bani Croacie;” DF 267 612, DF 267 614.

Peter Gereci.<sup>1075</sup> His younger brother, Michael, likewise started his career as a notary of the ban,<sup>1076</sup> to become, several years after Mohács, prothonotary of Slavonia and of the judge royal.<sup>1077</sup> Joseph died before 1523, leaving a son called Francis, tutored by his stepfather, George Fintiċ, who also called himself of Raven.<sup>1078</sup> Francis died before 1566 without heirs.<sup>1079</sup>

As for the sons of master Michael, Stephen seems to have died without offspring sometime after 1493.<sup>1080</sup> Emeric had a son called Paul, who apparently moved to the possession of Ramocsavölgye, whence he was named.<sup>1081</sup> Before 1492 he served Stephen Csupor of Monoszló,<sup>1082</sup> then joined Balthasar Batthyány.<sup>1083</sup> His widow, Helen, was mentioned as late as 1525.<sup>1084</sup> Paul had a sister as well, equally called Helen (Ilka), who married John Čavlović, and thus presumably became the mother of viceban Paul Čavlović (in case John and Paul were not brothers, as we have seen above). Another female member of the family, namely Anne, the daughter of master Michael, married first Michael Latk, then Ladislav Hermanfi, and her daughter from the latter later probably became the first consort of Balthasar Batthyány.<sup>1085</sup>

1075 MNL OL, DF 277 175/551 ecw.

1076 MNL OL, DF 277 175/009 ecw (1522): "unacum nobili Michaele de Rawen curie magnificencie vestre notario."

1077 Šišić, *Acta comitalia*, vol. II, 10: royal attorney (director causarum); Adamček–Kampuš, *Popisi*, 137–38 (Slavonian prothonotary); Középkori leveleink, 162 (prothonotary of the judge royal); MNL OL, *Libri regii*, vol. 2, 395 (prothonotary); 462–63 (his wife was Anne Acél, the daughter of Stephen Acél, aulicus and ispán of Pozsony, who had died at Mohács).

1078 MNL OL, DF 277 175/163–65 ecw.

1079 MNL OL, *Libri regii*, vol. 3, 880.

1080 MNL OL, DF 231 879.

1081 MNL OL, DL 104 011 (1494): "Paulo Rawenzky de Romachawelge."

1082 MNL OL, DF 231 847.

1083 MNL OL, DL 104 011.

1084 MNL OL, DF 277 175/417 ecw.

1085 It is to be remarked, however, that other persons and whole family groups equally called of Raven also turn up in our sources, yet they cannot be linked to the Raveni who have been treated in this chapter. Before all, the master Gregory son of Paul de Rawen, who is ennobled together with his numerous kin by queen Mary in 1389 (Smičklas, *Codex diplomaticus*, vol. XVII, 70–71). In 1412 this Gregory is already canon of Zagreb, archdeacon of Bekcsény (*Zsigmondkori Oklevéltár*, vol. III, no. 2779). In 1384 there emerge the sons of Nicholas, son of Myke of Raven (Smičklas, *Codex diplomaticus*, vol. XVI, 489). The boundaries of the land held by the former make it obvious that it likewise lay among the lands belonging to the castle of Körös, as names like "terra pristaldorum Crisiensium and nobilium castrensiu de Repynch" indicate (MNL OL, DF 255 686). Repinc lay in the vicinity of the late medieval possession of Raven, and so did Miketinc, in which I see the name of Myke mentioned above (Adamček–Kampuš, *Popisi*, 15). In the same way, Beketinc apparently preserved the name of Beke, son of Junk [Smičklas, *Codex diplomaticus*, vol. XV, 13–14]. As for the terra pristaldorum, it seems to have survived in the form of Pristawcz, in the same region (ibid.). All these people appear to have belonged to the castle of Körös, and gradually emerged as members of the local petty nobility as the castle structure dissolved in the course of the fourteenth century. See also the section on the Prasovci and Horzovai families, which seem equally to have belonged to the castle nobility of Körös.



## 19/c. Cirkvenai (od Crkvena, de Cirkvena, Cirquena)

The Cirkvenai family descended from the other son of Isaac, called Jaxa “ban”. The great-grandson of Jaxa, Peter, was first called of Cirkvena.<sup>1086</sup> He had two sons, Nicholas and John, and it was from the latter that the late medieval Cirkvenai family descended.<sup>1087</sup> They do not seem to have done anything memorable until the second decade of the fifteenth century, when Ladislás, son of John became ispán of Zagreb in the service of ban Paul Csupor.<sup>1088</sup> His appointment was certainly not unrelated to the fact that his distant kinsman, Nicholas Borotva was at the same time viceban and ispán of Körös. It may also have been a consequence of the fact that his brother, Nicholas, unlike some of their kin, remained faithful to Sigismund in the critical period around 1400.<sup>1089</sup> However, what could have become the promising debut of a long career, turned out to be its end at the same time, for Ladislás followed his lord to the Bosnian campaign in 1415, was captivated by the Ottomans and in all probability never returned to his homeland.<sup>1090</sup>

Ladislás probably left no surviving offspring, whereas his brother, Nicholas, also called Miksec (*Mikhecz*), which subsequently became a family name, had two sons, Paul and Nicholas. Their mother was the daughter of master Peter, son of Gregory Grebennai (*de Grebenna*), who was in all likelihood a notary in one of the chanceries.<sup>1091</sup> Since Nicholas also died soon thereafter, his underage sons were put under the tutelage of John Grebennai, their maternal uncle. Nevertheless, the members of the Raveni family immediately occupied some of the orphans’ estates, and the widow of the late Ladislás, probably belonging to the Toka of Kopacsovc family, also tried to usurp their rights.<sup>1092</sup> Some years later Paul and Nicholas, already of age, had to defend themselves against the efforts of the influential

1086 1369: Smičiklas, *Codex diplomaticus*, vol. XIV, 207: “Petrus filius Jacobi de Cirkvena;” Szentpéteri-Borsa, *Árpád-házi királyok*, no. 1511 (1266): Peter, son of Jaxa; Smičiklas, *Codex diplomaticus*, vol. VII, 282 (1297): James, son of Peter pledges “quandam particulam terre sue hereditarie de Cirkvena.”

1087 Smičiklas, *Codex diplomaticus*, vol. XV, 156–60.

1088 *Zsigmondkori Oklevéltár*, vol. IV, no. 1126. It is possible that his colleague, magister Michael literatus, is identical with the future prothonotary, Michael Raveni.

1089 MNL OL, DF 230 844. His services at that time are recorded by a charter wrongly dated by Smičiklas, *Codex diplomaticus*, vol. XVIII, 408–09 to around 1398; the palatine who issued the letter is certainly Nicholas Garai the younger, whereas the addressee, master Emeric son of ban Ladislás is Emeric Fáncs, which proves that the correct date is around 1403. He had already participated to the Bosnian expedition at the very end of the previous century: *ibid.*, 368–69, 412.

1090 *Zsigmondkori Oklevéltár*, vol. V, no. 2512.

1091 *Ibid.*, vol. VI, no. 2576. Smičiklas, *Codex diplomaticus*, vol. XVII, 585: “Petri filii Gregorii de Grebenna hominis nostri (sc. regis) ad id specialiter deputati,” twice titled magister.

1092 *Zsigmondkori Oklevéltár*, vol. VII, nos. 515, 754.

master Michael, prothonotary of Körös county, at vindicating their lands for himself.<sup>1093</sup>

In 1434 Paul obtained a coat of arms for himself and his brother Nicholas from emperor Sigismund at Regensburg, a sign that he may have accompanied the ruler for his journeys as a member of his court.<sup>1094</sup> Sometime before May 1438 Paul was elected as *szolgabíró* for Körös county, and he is frequently mentioned as such in the next twelve years.<sup>1095</sup> Parallel to his service as *szolgabíró* he also acted for some time as *comes terrestris* of Kemlék.<sup>1096</sup> After his leave from office he became prothonotary of the seat of Körös, and held this post until sometime before August 1456.<sup>1097</sup> We do not know why he was then temporarily removed from the office of prothonotary, nor do we know who followed him; in any case he returned to his office before April 1460 and remained there for more than five years.<sup>1098</sup> In one single case he was even referred to as prothonotary of the realm of Slavonia.<sup>1099</sup> For some time he also functioned as *vicarius temporalis* of the bishopric of Zagreb, evidently in the service of bishop Demetrius Csupor.<sup>1100</sup> In August 1466 we find him among the representatives of the Slavonian nobility, negotiating with bishop Oswald of Zagreb.<sup>1101</sup> Perhaps thanks to the support of the counts of Cilli, then bans of Slavonia, perhaps through other ways, Paul and his brother Nicholas came sufficiently close to the court of young king Ladislas V to obtain the privilege of high justice for their lands in 1453 and a royal confirmation of their estates two years later.<sup>1102</sup> As for Nicholas, he was also *szolgabíró* of Körös county for several years.<sup>1103</sup> Yet even these years of prosperity were not free of all setbacks: before 1450 John Vitovec devastated and burnt the family lands,<sup>1104</sup> whereas in 1457 the two brothers had to counter the claims of Thomas Oldi, castellan of Cserög (Čerević, SRB), who vindicated their estates for unknown reasons.<sup>1105</sup>

1093 MNL OL, DF 231 115.

1094 MNL OL, DF 286 305.

1095 1438 (MNL OL, DF 286 465); 1441 (*Levéltári Közlemények* 6 (1928): 129); 1445 (MNL OL, DF 231 225, *Levéltári Közlemények* 6 (1928): 131); 1447 (MNL OL, DF 231 226, DF 231 232); 1448 (DF 231 241); 1450 (*Levéltári Közlemények* 6 (1928): 133).

1096 MNL OL, DF 233 345: "Georgii Pyers et Pauli filii Mykchecz de Czyrkwena [...] capitaneorum et comitum terrestrium de Maiori Kemlyek."

1097 First mention: May 25, 1453 (MNL OL, DF 231 225); last: July 16, 1455 (DF 231 362); August 1456: "alias sedis [...] Crisiensis prothonotarius" (DF 231 372).

1098 MNL OL, DF 231 434 (April 26, 1460); DF 231 508 (July 19, 1465).

1099 Bónis, *Jogtudó értelmiség*, 277.

1100 MNL OL, DF 231 434.

1101 MNL OL, DF 252 046.

1102 MNL OL, DF 231 325, DF 231 362.

1103 1455 (MNL OL, DF 275 930); 1456 (DL 102 131); 1457 (DL 15 201); 1458 (DL 35 985); 1459 (DF 288 153); 1460 (DF 218 870); 1461 (DF 231 445); 1462 (*Levéltári Közlemények* 6 (1928): 148).

1104 MNL OL, DF 231 262.

1105 MNL OL, DF 231 386; Engel, *Archontológia*, vol. I, 294. See also MNL OL, DF 265 931.

Among the sons of master Paul, Nicholas the younger followed in the footsteps of his father and functioned as *szolgabíró* of Körös for almost five years.<sup>1106</sup> Nothing is known about another son called Ladislav, whereas two of their brothers made a career in the church. Peter became a canon of Csázma, and was even *custos* and *locumtenens* for some years.<sup>1107</sup> His brother, John also entered the church, and, presumably after the death of Peter likewise became a canon at Csázma. Besides his canonry he also held the important parish church of the Holy Cross at Körös, where most of the oaths judged at the banal seat took place.<sup>1108</sup> None of the two lay brothers seem to have left children, and all four sons of master Paul disappeared by the early 1470s.

Consequently, all the lands held by the family came into the hands of Peter, son of Nicholas the elder.<sup>1109</sup> One of his sisters, Barbara was taken away during the great Ottoman incursion of 1476.<sup>1110</sup> Upon the career of Peter himself very little is known. In 1481 he was castellan of Szarvaskő (Jelengrad, CRO) in the service of Stephen Csopor,<sup>1111</sup> whereas later he acted as elected noble juror of Körös county, a post normally held by members of families from which otherwise the *szolgabírák* were recruited.<sup>1112</sup> He was nevertheless regularly titled *egregius*,<sup>1113</sup> and his daughter, Dorothy contracted an advantageous marriage. Before 4 May 1498 she was betrothed with Paul, the son of George Kerecsényi, *vicarius temporalis* of the bishopric of Zagreb, and all the lands of Peter were to devolve upon the young couple after his death.<sup>1114</sup> Paul Kerecsényi, the future viceban of John of Corbavia, did consequently inherit the Cirkvenai estates, although it is not sure whether the *castellum* which is first recorded at Cirkvena in 1505 was the work of his father, George, or it had already been erected by his father-in-law Peter.<sup>1115</sup> The latter is mentioned for the last time in November 1498 and died soon afterwards, whereas his only known son, John, disappeared several years before his father's death.<sup>1116</sup> The wife of Peter Mikcsec, Martha, was the daughter of

1106 1465 (*Levéltári Közlemények* 8 (1930):, 96); 1466 (MNL OL, DF 262 037, Nicholas son of Paul); 1468 (*Levéltári Közlemények* 3 (1925): 150); 1470 (MNL OL, DL 32 848); 1471 (DF 231 582).

1107 MNL OL, DF 282 432: "magister Petrus Mykchecz custos canonicus et locumtenens ecclesie Chasmensis;" DF 231 434.

1108 MNL OL, DL 94 233 (1468): "Johannes Mykchecz canonicus ecclesie Chasmensis ac plebanus Sancte Crucis de Crisio;" DF 231 581 (1471): "honorabilis vir dominus Johannes plebanus Crisiensis."

1109 MNL OL, DF 231 757: "Petrus filius quondam Nicolai filii Nicolai Mykchecz dicti de Cirquena."

1110 MNL OL, DF 231 758.

1111 MNL OL, DL 45 876.

1112 *Levéltári Közlemények* 8 (1930): 98.

1113 Eg. MNL OL, DF 231 850, DF 231 860, DF 231 943, DF 232 004.

1114 MNL OL, DF 219 099.

1115 MNL OL, DF 232 179: "Benedicto castellano [...] in Czirquena constituto."

1116 MNL OL, DF 231 846 (1492); he is not mentioned thereafter.

Nicholas Gilétfi, member of a rich and illustrious noble family which possessed a castle, a *castellum* and some thirty villages in the neighbouring county of Pozsega.<sup>1117</sup>

19/d. Kustyer of Szenternye (Kwscher de Zentherne, Zenthernye)

Master Nicholas, son of Peter of Szenternye (*Zenthernye*) appears somewhat unexpectedly in 1370 as the son-in-law of John son of John, grandson of Junk.<sup>1118</sup> Both possessions mentioned on this occasion, namely Szenternye and Orehovc, originally belonged to the kin of Isaac, that is, the castle of Körös.<sup>1119</sup> As it appears later, they were donated, together with other lands pertaining to the castle of Körös, before 1370 by king Louis I to master Nicholas.<sup>1120</sup> It is impossible to know what kind of services justified the royal donation, and it is at least probable that it was John son of John, grandson of Junk who helped his son-in-law to have access to the king. In 1411 the son of Nicholas, Thomas is referred to as a castle noble (*nobilis castri*) of Diankovc (Dijankovec, CRO),<sup>1121</sup> another possession belonging to the castle of Körös, and two years later we see him suing, in the name of his kinsmen, Andrew and Ladislav Borotva, another nobleman of Diankovc for a parcel of land there.<sup>1122</sup> It would therefore be logical to suppose that Nicholas originally was member of the conditional noble group living at Diankovc<sup>1123</sup> and owned his consequent rise and master title, as well as his possessions, to his marriage with the daughter of John. Yet things are more complicated than would seem to be at first sight.

Sometime before 1371 king Louis I donated some portions of the possession called Selyp in the county of Nógrád, namely those of Nicholas son of Francis, Paul, son of Peter called Fat (Hung. *Kövér*), and Nicholas son of Michael, to the five sons of Peter Sári, Nicholas, John, Thomas, Stephen and George. In 1371 Nicholas and George, acting in the name of the two sons of their brother John as well, sold *their* possession of Selyp together with its appurtenances in the counties of Nógrád and Heves for 400 florins to the illustrious Cudar family, whose possession called Lőrinci lay in the immediate

1117 MNL OL, DF 232 505: "nobili domina Dorothea consorte egregii Pauli de Kerechen filia videlicet egregii condam Petri Mykchecz de Czyrkwena ex nobili condam domina Martha filia olim Nicolai Geledffy alio nomine Wythez dicti de Gelethyncz [procreata];" here also the lands of the family listed.

1118 Smičiklas, *Codex diplomaticus*, vol. XIV, 250–51: "Magister Nicolaus filius Petri de Scencherney."

1119 Szenternye: *ibid.*, vol. XII, 401. It borders upon the town of Újkörös: *Zsigmondkori Oklevéltár*, vol. IX, no. 50. On Orehovc(szentpéter) see above.

1120 Smičiklas, *Codex diplomaticus*, vol. XVIII, 194–95. On Gesztenovc see *ibid.*, vol. XV, 22.

1121 *Zsigmondkori Oklevéltár*, vol. III, no. 663.

1122 *Ibid.*, vol. IV, no. 574.

1123 The namegiver seems to have been the Dianco son of Martin, castle noble of Körös, who is mentioned in 1344: Smičiklas, *Codex diplomaticus*, vol. XI, 124.

vicinity. Other members of the Selypi family protested repeatedly, and in 1394 at the assembly of the counties of Nógrád and Hont the elected noble jurors confirmed upon the request of John son of Nicholas Selypi and his sons that their portion of Selyp had indeed been unlawfully occupied by the Cudar. The latter claimed that Nicholas son of Peter, from whom they had purchased the possession, was still alive, and asked him to be cited accordingly; indeed, the person cited was then called Nicholas, son of Peter of Szenternye. Then the case dragged on for several years through repeated postponements, and it was finally Thomas, son of Nicholas of Szenternye who appeared before the palatine, and immediately abstained himself from the case, claiming that all documents concerning the possession of Selyp had been handed over to the Cudar, in none of which was any mention of the seller's obligation to defend the buyers before the law.<sup>1124</sup>

Since we have no knowledge of any other Szenternye in the medieval kingdom of Hungary owned by nobles, and in any case the sequence of Thomas son of Nicholas son of Peter of Szenternye is unlikely to occur twice in the same period, it can be safely stated that the father of Nicholas, Peter is identical with the Peter Sári whose sons received Selyp from the king. The only problem is to define which Sár we are dealing with? The obvious solution is Gibártsár in the county of Heves, and the John Sári mentioned above seems to be identifiable with the deputy of ispán Simon Szécsényi in the county of Borsod, referred to in 1404.<sup>1125</sup> Their move to Slavonia may have been connected to the banish of Peter Cudar, and that of the Selypi as well, who later turn up in the Slavonian sources as Selypi of Raven.<sup>1126</sup>

Both sons of Nicholas, Michael and Thomas took part in the disastrous expedition to Nicopolis, and Thomas was even seriously wounded there. In return they were confirmed by king Sigismund in the possession of Szenternye and five other villages "under the titles of true and sincere nobility and of our new donation,"<sup>1127</sup> a further proof of the previous conditional status of these lands. The charter referred to their participation in other, non-specified campaigns, but this may be no more than a traditional formula of the chancery. Consequently they almost completely disappear from our sources, however. Michael may have died, whereas Thomas is mentioned as a royal man in

1124 All the charters cited are transcribed in MNL OL, DF 230 548.

1125 Engel, *Archontológia*, vol. II, 210. Peter, son of Stephen Selypi is alispán of Nógrád in 1395–1397: *ibid.*, 212.

1126 It has to be admitted, however, that it is in 1366 that both Nicholas, son of Peter Selypi, and Nicholas, son of Michael Sári turn up in Slavonia for the first time (Smičiklas, *Codex diplomaticus*, vol. XIII, 512–13), that is, two years before the appointment of Peter Cudar as ban of Slavonia, and the former is referred to three years later as the *familiaris* of John Kanizsai, bishop of Zagreb (*ibid.*, vol. XIV, 208–09).

1127 Smičiklas, *Codex diplomaticus*, vol. XVIII, 194–95: "sub vero et sincero nobilitatis noveque nostre donationis titulis."

1412<sup>1128</sup> and as a lawyer at the banal seat in 1420.<sup>1129</sup> It is thus somewhat surprising that in 1439 we find both Matthias, son of Thomas and his kinsman, John Kustyer among the representatives of the Slavonian nobility at the assembly of Kőrös, where all the other participants listed seem to have belonged to more illustrious families of the region.

The obvious growth in influence of Matthias Kustyer in the following years may have been due partly at least to his marriage with Clara, the daughter of Ladislav Goricaí (*de Gorycha*) from Zagreb county. Very little is known about the Goricaí family, but it apparently belonged to the noble élite of the county. Ladislav's son, Martin was a *familiaris* of the counts of Cilli, and trusted enough to be able to borrow the enormous sum of two thousand florins from his lords in 1445.<sup>1130</sup> As we will see below, he married the daughter of Ladislav Pekri called Susan.<sup>1131</sup> The family was somehow related to the Tót of Szomszédvár, for in 1449 Martin Goricaí tried together with his sisters, among whom Clara was already the wife of Matthias Kustyer, to obtain the castle of Szomszédvár from Dorothy Tót and her husband, but to no avail.<sup>1132</sup>

Following his marriage with Susan Pekri, Martin Goricaí took into pledge portions of the estate of Garignica, and the money needed was partly supplied by his brother-in-law, Matthias Kustyer. Since Martin had no children from his wife, he bequeathed his parts in the estate to his brother, Nicholas, and his sisters, Clara and Margaret until their redemption. Moreover, he handed over the letters of pledge concerning Garignica to Matthias Kustyer until his money was repaid by Susan. This act led to protracted litigation with Susan Pekri and her new husband, Christoph Paschingar, which will be treated in detail below.<sup>1133</sup>

In 1453 Matthias Kustyer was designated royal man at the introduction of John Vitovec (into Kristallóc), and entered his service after his appointment as ban. In 1461 he acted in a case as a "judge and commissioner" delegated by the ban, which certainly proves that he belonged to the judicial apparatus of Vitovec.<sup>1134</sup> He retained his authority even after Vitovec made peace with the king, for in August 1466 he was elected into the committee which negotiated with bishop Oswald,<sup>1135</sup> whereas two years later he was one of the *probi homines* who were authorised to elect the persons who would accompany the

1128 *Levél-tári Közlemények* 8 (1930): 89–90.

1129 *Zsigmondkori Oklevéltár*, vol. VII, no. 2077.

1130 MNL OL, DL 106 973. In 1438 Martin was a *familiaris* of the counts of Cilli, and took part as such in an attack upon the city of Zagreb: Tkalčić, *Monumenta*, vol. II, 137–38.

1131 His last will was accordingly drafted at Garignica, one of its executors being precisely Matthias Kustyer: MNL OL, DF 244 384.

1132 MNL OL, DF 274 979.

1133 See the section on the Pekri family.

1134 *Levél-tári Közlemények* 8 (1930): 93: "Matthey Kuscher de Zenth Jerney iudex et commissarius per magnificum dominum Jan Zagorie comitem, necnon regni Slavonie banum in hac parte deputatus."

1135 MNL OL, DF 252 046.



episcopal tax collectors.<sup>1136</sup> He was regularly called *egregius*,<sup>1137</sup> and it was apparently he who erected on his estate the *castellum* which later bore his name. He certainly spent a lot of money on enlarging his estate of Szenternye/Kustyerolc, which in 1476 amounted to almost a hundred inhabited tenant plots.<sup>1138</sup> The only surviving child of Matthias was a daughter called Margaret, whom he married to Paul Grebeni; it is no wonder, then, that the fate of his considerable landed wealth raised much attention in the region. In 1467 king Matthias granted, upon the petition of Nicholas Csupor, then knight of the court, to Matthias the right to dispose freely of his estates for the case of his death.<sup>1139</sup> This measure obviously favoured Nicholas himself, to whom the king had promised all his possessions in advance. Yet they apparently never came into the hands of Nicholas Csupor. In November of the same year Matthias adopted the Korotnai brothers, John, prothonotary of the palatine, and Gregory, as his brothers, and conferred all his lands upon them for the case of his heirless death.<sup>1140</sup> In 1469 Nicholas Csupor protested at the king, stating that Matthias had already promised his inheritance to him in return for sustenance until his death, which he in fact provided.<sup>1141</sup> Whatever the case, the influential Csupor apparently failed to prevail against the prothonotary, for the Kustyer lands did devolve upon the Korotnai brothers after the death of Matthias.<sup>1142</sup> Later on, however, the *castellum* and its appurtenances came into the possession of ban Damian Horváth and his brother, to devolve ultimately upon Louis Pekri after 1490.<sup>1143</sup>

#### 2.2.20. Jakószerdahelyi (od Sredica, de Jakozerdahel)

We will see below that the Kamarcai family owned at least parts of Jakószerdahely, its members were even sometimes called of it, which raises the possibility that the possession itself may have owed its name to Jako, son of Blagonya, who was beyond doubt a member of the Kamarcai family. Indeed, Jakószerdahely

1136 MNL OL, DF 252 047.

1137 MNL OL, DL 103 668, DL 45 278, DL 102 157, DF 274 949.

1138 Borsá, *Balassa család levéltára*, no. 411.

1139 MNL OL, DL 33 355.

1140 MNL OL, DL 17 118.

1141 MNL OL, DL 25 363, the king's letter to Matthias: "te cum suis expensis a multis temporibus elapsis usquemodo nutritisset."

1142 MNL OL, DL 103 737 (1472): "in possessione Kwschyerocz vocata [...] domo videlicet et curia eiusdem magistri Johannis in eadem habita."

1143 Later, after the heirless death of Matthias Kustyer, we see Thomas and George Kustyer, both called of Palicsna, turning up as neighbours and (the latter) as designated banal man (MNL OL, DL 100 901, DL 100 908, DF 231 857). They may have been the descendants of John Kustyer, who was mentioned together with Matthias in 1439, but there is no evidence to support this suggestion.

was once stated to lay within Kamarca itself,<sup>1144</sup> and was important enough to host an assembly as early as 1349. Yet it is impossible to establish with any certainty the descent of the late medieval Jakószerdahelyi family from any known member of the Kamarcai kindred, nor is it possible to prepare a genealogy comprising all the known members of the family. Again, as in the case of the Kamarcai, an unusually great number of persons are called of Jakószerdahely in our sources, which is certainly a sign of a very early settlement in the region.

What seems certain is that the Jakószerdahelyi who played some role in the late medieval county of Körös descended from a certain Egidius, son of Peter, who seems to be identical with the person bearing the same name who is listed among the neighbours of Prodaviz and Kamarca in 1366.<sup>1145</sup> In 1370 this Egidius divided his lands in and around Jakószerdahely with his kinsmen.<sup>1146</sup> The sons of Egidius, James and Martin fought in the service of bishop Eberhard of Zagreb against the Ottomans and their Bosnian allies, and later took part with ban Denis Marcali in the Italian expedition as well as in that against the Hussites in Bohemia. As a reward they were confirmed in 1423 by king Sigismund in their possession of Jakószerdahely and its appurtenances.<sup>1147</sup>

The text of the donation mentioned their kinsman, Dominic son of Gregory, who seems to have been the brother of James, son of Gregory of Jakószerdahely, who became canon of Zagreb. He was not the only cleric in the family, however. In 1414 a certain Denis, son of Valentine of Jakószerdahely, canon of Bács is referred to as the special chaplain of king Sigismund, and he certainly was a member of the family which concerns us here, although I was unable to link him to the branch of Egidius. Nor can his place be found among the descendants of Luke, who are also said to be the kinsmen of archdeacon James in 1435.<sup>1148</sup>

It would be fairly convenient to regard Blaise Briga, the most outstanding member of the family, as the son of James Jakószerdahelyi, since his father was indeed called James. Yet the sobriquet "Briga" does not seem to have been used in the Jakószerdahelyi family, and when he first appears in the sources he is called of Sasomberg,<sup>1149</sup> which lay in the county of Zagreb.<sup>1150</sup>

1144 Smičiklas, *Codex diplomaticus*, vol. XI, 526 (1349): "ad locum in Kamarcha qui vocatur Jakowzeredahel."

1145 Ibid., vol. XIII, 559.

1146 Ibid., vol. XIV, 262–63.

1147 *Zsigmondkori Oklevéltár*, vol. X, no. 1531. The John, son of Egidius of Jakószerdahely, who is referred to as rector of the church of the Holy Cross at Szobocsina in 1414 (ibid., vol. IV, no. 2861) may also have been their brother.

1148 In 1472 the grandson of Peter, son of Luke was parish priest at Jakószerdahely.

1149 MNL OL, DF 255 746: "Blasius et Mathias filii Jacobi Briga de Sermosbergh." In the draft of the chapter's report the village is spelled Sasombergh.

1150 Adamček–Kampuš, *Popisi*, 18.

Later, however, he is constantly called Jakószerdahelyi, with two exceptions, when he is referred to as Plavnicamelléki<sup>1151</sup> and Plavnicaszentbenedeki<sup>1152</sup> respectively. Thus it cannot be stated with absolute certainty that he and his two brothers, Matthias and Thomas were in fact the sons of James Jakószerdahelyi, although this would most obviously account for the fact that they inherited the estate of Jakószerdahely.

Somewhat before 1458 Blaise Briga entered the service of John Vitovec, who appointed him as his viceban in 1458. Although he spent no more than a few months in this office, he remained in the service of the ban thereafter and was accordingly pardoned among his *familiares* in 1463.<sup>1153</sup> It was apparently as a *familiaris* of Vitovec that he acquainted himself with Peter Gudovci, in whose company he acquired some lands in the county of Körös, and even received a royal grant.<sup>1154</sup> Later on he joined bishop John of Pécs, at least it was for participation in the latter's conspiracy that he was proscribed in 1481.<sup>1155</sup> In 1475, however, he was already in the service of bishop Oswald of Zagreb.<sup>1156</sup> In the 1470s, notwithstanding his involvement in the opposition movement of 1471, he was a nobleman of respect in his native county, as his participation in arbitrations, his role as royal man in cases of some importance, his being occasionally titled *egregius*, and his listing among the representatives of the Slavonian nobility show.<sup>1157</sup> The John Briga, who died heirless before 1495 may have been the son of Blaise; in any case, he is the last person who turns up in the sources with this name.<sup>1158</sup>

We know even less about the kinsmen of Blaise Briga. Alongside Blaise himself and his brother Thomas, Peter and a certain Valentine the "great" (*magnus*) turn up in our sources, who were also *familiares* of ban Vitovec.<sup>1159</sup> Moreover, some at least among the persons who appear at Jakószerdahely may also be attached to the neighbouring Miletinc, and the other way round,<sup>1160</sup> which, together with the sobriquet Briga, also used by the Miletinci family, raise the possibility of a close relationship (or the common origin) of the two families.<sup>1161</sup> It should also be added that not even the whole of Jakószerdahely was owned by the Jakószerdahelyi family: alongside their kinsmen, the Kamarcai, Peter Gudovci, Philip Businci and Blaise Progovci

1151 MNL OL, DL 15 250 (1458): "Blasius filius quondam Jacobi de Plawniczamelleyky."

1152 MNL OL, DF 218 978 (1479): "Blasio Briga de Jakozerdahel et de Plavniczazenthbenedek."

1153 MNL OL, DF 233 405.

1154 MNL OL, DF 231 888.

1155 Tringli, "Szlavóniai közgyűlés," 315; Thallóczy-Barabás, *Blagay oklevéltár*, 388.

1156 MNL OL, DF 261 839.

1157 MNL OL, DL 100 851, DF 276 827, DL 34 926, DF 231 656, DF 231 669.

1158 MNL OL, DF 231 953.

1159 MNL OL, DF 231 667; DL 103 812, here Valentine as "Poldreugh."

1160 Eg. MNL OL, DL 104 011: George Simonfy of Jakószerdahely, and DF 231 888, where he is called of Miletinc. Briga of Miletinc: Lukinović, *Povijesni spomenici*, vol. VII, 351.

1161 Indeed, among the possessions which bishop Oswald petitioned from the king both Jakószerdahely and Miletinc were mentioned.

also acquired or inherited portions of it.<sup>1162</sup> Indeed, the Bontusovci, who were surely related to the Businci, later appear in the sources as Jakószerdahelyi, such as George Bontusovci, who was szolgabíró of Körös in the early sixteenth century.<sup>1163</sup>

### 2.2.21. Kamarcai (od Komarnica, de Kamarcha)

The origins of the Kamarcai family, which gave two vicebans to Slavonia, and a bishop to the church, are shrouded by the obscurity that covers thickly the early history of Slavonia. Many traces show that originally they had been one of the richest landowners of Körös county, who owned a wide stretch of lands along the Kamarca river and down to Jakószerdahely and Orbona deep in the heart of the county, covering almost the whole territory of the archdeaconry of Kamarca.<sup>1164</sup> Yet the many persons referred to as “of Kamarca” throughout the charters cannot be all linked to each other, and the most important question of whether they were indigenous in Slavonia or newcomers in the eleventh or twelfth centuries cannot be answered. However, the mere fact that so many persons are mentioned as belonging to the kin-group in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries hints at an early settlement in the region. As early as the middle of the thirteenth century they were widespread and well-known

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1162 MNL OL, DF 231 837; DF 231 985 (Blaise Progovci was the son of Elizabeth, daughter of Dominic Jakószerdahelyi who is mentioned in 1423).

1163 See above the chapter on Elias Bosnyák.

1164 Of course, as usual with the Slavonian villages, very few of the Kamarcai lands can be localised with any certainty. What is sure, however, is that Kamarca itself lay along the river of the same name, and bordered upon the estate of Prodaviz (Smičiklas, *Codex diplomaticus*, vol. V, 561–66). It is in the same region that Molve lays, mentioned in the possession of the Kamarcai in the middle of the fourteenth century (*ibid.*, vol. XIII, 553). Among the parishes of the archdeaconry of Kamarca, after Prodaviz and Szentgyörgy, a Saint Martin parish church is listed, which I identify with the village later known as Kernin- and Novaszentmárton, one of the chief possessions of the Kamarcai family, and of which its members were sometimes called (Csánki, *Körösmegye*, 67). In view of the fact that the church of the neighbouring Prodaviz was likewise dedicated to Saint Martin, it is possible that originally the two had constituted one single estate. Plavnicaszentbenedek and Jakószerdahely were located further southwards, in the middle of the county (they still exist today as Plavnice and Velike Sredice); Koren (Veliko and Malo Korenovo), which also belonged to the Kamarcai kindred, is also situated in this region. Yet the fact that, as mentioned above, Jakószerdahely was once stated in the Angevin period to lay in Kamarca itself, shows that originally the whole region may have been called Kamarca. In any case, since Kamarca gave its name to one of the archdeaconries of the bishopric of Zagreb, its early importance seems beyond doubt.

enough to be referred to simply as “the nobles of Kamarca”<sup>1165</sup> or “those of Kamarca”.<sup>1166</sup>

There existed a “Kamarca kindred,” which János Karácsonyi enumerated among the Slavonian (“*tótországi*”) kindreds.<sup>1167</sup> Some of the persons referred to as Kamarcai later can indeed be linked to this kindred. For example, the Petk(o) son of Wlchk of the Kamarca kindred, who in 1244 assisted at the introduction of ban Denis into Orbona, was surely identical with the Petk whose son Martin was mentioned in 1289;<sup>1168</sup> the son of the latter, Peter Kamarcai referred in 1304 to James son of Blagonya as his kinsman.<sup>1169</sup> In 1268 a certain *comes* Elias Kamarcai is mentioned,<sup>1170</sup> whereas in 1277 Blagonya son of Zaria emerges at Kernin,<sup>1171</sup> which, alongside Kamarca, can be regarded as one of the most ancient properties of the Kamarcai family; indeed, it is, like Jakószerdahely, sometimes referred to as laying within Kamarca itself.<sup>1172</sup> Cosmas son of Pribislaus is likewise called Kamarcai in 1269;<sup>1173</sup> his father, Pribislaus is surely identical with the son of Stephen who occurs in 1246 as the possessor of Zdenc,<sup>1174</sup> whereas Cosmas himself was excommunicated by the bishop of Zagreb together with Farkas son of Tolomerius and Stephen, son of Belus, ancestor of the Gorbonoki family, both members of the leading Slavonian nobility in the second half of the thirteenth century.<sup>1175</sup> The *gener* of this Pribislaus *comes* was Alexander, son of Cosmas of the Tibold kindred,<sup>1176</sup> and in 1324 the sons of James, son of Blagonya equally called Paul son of Mihalc of the Tibold kindred their kinsman.<sup>1177</sup> Whatever the origin of this relationship,<sup>1178</sup> it proves beyond doubt, together with the title of *comes* constantly attributed to them and the persons in the company of whom they turn up in the sources, that during the thirteenth century members of the Kamarcai family were counted among the noble élite of Slavonia. Some at least of the names used among them are obviously Slavic, which may be interpreted as a sign of their being indigenous in the region.

1165 Smičiklas, *Codex diplomaticus*, vol. V, 230: “*terram [...] nobilium de Kamarcha.*”

1166 “*Kamarcensium*” (1270), limitation of the borders of Prodaviz (*ibid.*, 563).

1167 Karácsonyi, *Magyar nemzetségek*, 1112.

1168 Smičiklas, *Codex diplomaticus*, vol. VI, 681. See also *ibid.*, vol. IV, 170: “*Blagona, Acha comitibus, Farkasio de Zagoria et Petk de Camarcha presentibus.*”

1169 *Anjou-kori Oklevéltár*, vol. I, no. 628.

1170 Smičiklas, *Codex diplomaticus*, vol. V, 482.

1171 *Ibid.*, vol. VI, 214.

1172 *Ibid.*, vol. X, 578–79.

1173 *Ibid.*, vol. V, 487.

1174 *Ibid.*, vol. IV, 40–41.

1175 *Ibid.*, vol. V, 487.

1176 Klaić, “*Plemići Svetački*,” 9.

1177 *Anjou-kori Oklevéltár*, vol. VIII, no. 265.

1178 It is certainly worth remarking that some of the names used among the Kamarcai kindred, such as Cosmas, Zaria and Alexander, turn up equally among the Tibold kindred in the same period.

The history of the family and its exact descent in the fourteenth century is as obscure as before. Alongside the descendants of the two sons of Blagonya, James and Jako<sup>1179</sup> *comites*,<sup>1180</sup> a great number of other persons are equally called of Kamarca, whose identification is impossible.<sup>1181</sup> Most of these persons are referred to as *comes*, and later distinguished with the master title, but not even elements of their careers can be reconstructed. The person from whom the late medieval Kamarcai family, among them the two vicebans, descended, was master Stephen, son of Andrew, who in 1363 divided his possessions with his brother, Pasa.<sup>1182</sup> The father of this Stephen was probably *comes* Andrew, son of Farkas (perhaps the son of Tolomerius), who was a close kinsman of Blagonya.<sup>1183</sup> In 1363 he had portions in the possessions of Jakószerdahely, Ugrunovc (*Ugrunoucz*), Plavnica (*Plawnycha*), Kernin (*Kernyn*), Kamarca and Pothna, which all turn up later in the hands of the Kamarcai family.<sup>1184</sup> Stephen apparently had three sons, Peter, Ladislás and Nicholas, whom Ladislás son of Luke of Jakószerdahely prohibited in 1377 from the occupation of his portion at Ugrunovc.<sup>1185</sup> In 1398 Peter, son of Stephen was among those who were designated as substitute arbitrators for the settlement of a dispute between the Zrinski and Blagaj families.<sup>1186</sup>

In 1403 Peter and two of his sons, Andrew and Stephen, were sentenced for infidelity as partisans of Ladislás of Naples,<sup>1187</sup> as was their kinsman, Jako son of Blagonya, who had joined John, archbishop of Kalocsa.<sup>1188</sup> On this occasion the father of Peter, Stephen is first mentioned as Vitéz (*Wytez*), which later became a constant element of the family's name. Yet the disgrace of the family was neither definitive nor complete.<sup>1189</sup> It seems that the third son of

1179 In this Jako I suspect the namegiver of Jakószerdahely, as already mentioned above.

1180 Smičiklas, *Codex diplomaticus*, vol. VIII, 424–26.

1181 In 1366 no less than 21 persons are enumerated as nobles of Kamarca (*ibid.*, vol. XIII, 552–61), and the list seems still far from complete. Since no other so numerous kindred is known from Slavonia whose members were called by the same possession, this unusual phenomenon certainly calls for some kind of explanation. It may have something to do with an early social organisation which, however, does not seem to have been attached to any castle.

1182 *Somogy Megye Múltjából* 14 (1983), no. 27. Pasa was the royal man introducing the Cudar family (in the county of Zagreb) in 1364 (Smičiklas, *Codex diplomaticus*, vol. XIII, 590–91). It is certainly he whose name survived in the late medieval village of Pasinc, likewise attested in the possession of the Kamarcai family: MNL OL, DF 255 587.

1183 *Anjou-kori Oklevéltár*, vol. XV, no. 133.

1184 *Somogy Megye Múltjából* 14, no. 27 (1983).

1185 Smičiklas, *Codex diplomaticus*, vol. XV, 336.

1186 *Zsigmondkori Oklevéltár*, vol. I, no. 5308.

1187 *Ibid.*, vol. II/1, no. 3657.

1188 MNL OL, DF 230 834.

1189 In 1431 the lawsuit started by the contradiction of the Kamarcai and their fellows was still going on: MNL OL, DL 103 552.



Peter, Michael,<sup>1190</sup> was left unpunished because he had already joined bishop Eberhard; for he is surely identical with the Michael Vitéz, son of Peter, who in 1406–1408 was castellan of the Albeni family in their castles of Pölöske and Tátika.<sup>1191</sup> As mentioned above, soon another potential supporter of the family was present in the royal court: Denis, son of Valentine of Jakószerdahely, canon of Bács and special royal chaplain.<sup>1192</sup> Moreover, another Peter Vitéz, most probably the son of Michael, son of Peter,<sup>1193</sup> married the sister of John Megyericsei, who also joined the court of king Sigismund in the 1430s.<sup>1194</sup> Stephen son of Peter thus first acted as the tax collector of ban Denis Marcali,<sup>1195</sup> then seems to have joined, together with his brother Andrew, the bishop of Zagreb.<sup>1196</sup> In 1423 he was appointed by the new ban, count Herman of Cilli, as one of his vicebans, and functioned as such, although perhaps with an interruption, until early in 1427. His brother, Andrew, was involved in the settlement of the quarrel between the city of Zagreb and the local bishop in the company of persons such as the bishop of Knin, Peter Kasztellánfi, Michael Raveni, the prothonotary of Körös, and John Tóth of Szomszédvár.<sup>1197</sup> In 1424 Andrew and Stephen acted as arbitrators together with Bartholomew Fánics and George Dombai.<sup>1198</sup> Their father, Peter also remained a man of influence in Körös: in 1417 he was elected as arbitrator together with John Roh and John Szencsei,<sup>1199</sup> and may also have accompanied Sigismund to Constance.<sup>1200</sup>

Although our sources get more numerous in the course of the fifteenth century, the reconstruction of the individual careers is hindered by the existence of several contemporary persons bearing the same name.<sup>1201</sup> Thus, in the middle of the fifteenth century there are two persons called John, two

1190 Unlike in the charter of sentence, in 1408 all three sons are listed: “Petrum filium Stephani de [...] Kamarcha [...] ac Michaellem, Andream et Stephanum filios eiusdem.” Lukinović, *Povijesni spomenici*, vol. V, 315.

1191 Engel, *Archontológia*, vol. II, 259. Engel does not regard him as member of the Kamarcai family.

1192 *Zsigmondkori Oklevéltár*, vol. IX, no. 992. It should be remarked that Anthony Koreni, who is referred to as a special royal man, that is, also a member of the court, in 1429, likewise belonged to the Kamarcai family. Michael, son of Barnaby Koreni was frater uterinus of Stephen, son of John of Plavnicaszentbenedek. In 1462 Ladislás, son of Anthony Koreni pledged his portions at Plavnicaszentbenedek. In 1521 Thomas Koreni was still having parts of Kamarcha: MNL OL, DF 277 175/ 061–063 ecw.

1193 MNL OL, DL 103 558 (1433).

1194 See below the chapter on the Megyericsei family.

1195 *Zsigmondkori Oklevéltár*, vol. VII, nos. 2275, 2401–02.

1196 *Ibid.*, vol. VIII, no. 1135.

1197 Lukinović, *Povijesni spomenici*, vol. VI, 460–61.

1198 *Zsigmondkori Oklevéltár*, vol. XI, no. 564.

1199 *Ibid.*, vol. VI, nos. 664, 803.

1200 *Ibid.*, vol. V, no. 95.

1201 And things are even more complicated by those persons, likewise called Kamarcai, who did not belong to the Vitéz branch of the kindred, and will be treated separately below.

called Andrew and two called Ladislav within the Kamarcai (Vitéz) family existing simultaneously, and whenever the name of their father is not given, distinction between them is far from straightforward. The problem is further complicated by the fact that members of the family turn up under a great variety of names, again a highly unusual phenomenon in this late section of the Hungarian middle ages.

To start with, the Ladislav who was named among the representatives of the Slavonian nobility in August 1466 at Zagreb,<sup>1202</sup> then elected as one of the four *probi viri* in 1468 who had the right to elect the persons who would then assist the episcopal tax collectors,<sup>1203</sup> seems to have been the son of viceban Stephen rather than that of Nicholas Kamarcai. There is a charter surviving which he issued under his own seal in June 1461<sup>1204</sup>, and he was certainly titled *egregius*.<sup>1205</sup> A much more important figure of the family is John Vitéz (commonly, though wrongly called John Vitéz *junior* in the historiography), canon and later provost of Várad, then bishop of Szerém (Srem/Srijem) and Veszprém.<sup>1206</sup> That he was a member of the Vitéz of Kamarca family is made evident by a charter from 1475, when it was upon the instigation of master John Vitéz of Kamarca, provost of Várad, that George Forster, castellan of Szentgyörgyvár, sent his own *familiares* upon the estate of Garignica, then in the possession of viceban Nicholas Pozsegai.<sup>1207</sup> He was probably the son of Peter Kamarcai who is mentioned in 1433, and thus the grandson of Michael; in this case his mother was a member of the Megyericsei family. His church career was apparently prepared by John Vitéz, bishop of Várad who, however, was certainly not his uncle.<sup>1208</sup> Also member of the Vitéz of Kamarca family was another ecclesiastic, namely Michael, son of Peter Vitéz. Like John, he had

1202 MNL OL, DF 252 046.

1203 MNL OL, DF 252 047.

1204 *Levél-tári Közlemények* 6 (1928): 143.

1205 MNL OL, DL 34 896.

1206 His career was reconstructed by Vilmos Fraknói, "Mátyás király magyar diplomatái XIV. Ifjabb Vitéz János" [The Hungarian Diplomats of King Matthias. John Vitéz the Younger], *Századok* 33 (1899): 291–309 (he regards him as the son of the elder John's brother). More recently: Gergely Sonnevend, "Ifjabb Vitéz János veszprémi püspök" [Bishop John Vitéz the Younger], in *Veszprém reneszánsza* 2008 [The Renaissance of Veszprém], ed. László Kilián and Pál Rainer (Veszprém: Művészetek Háza, 2008), 121. He also regards the "elder" Vitéz as his paternal uncle. John apparently started his career as a canon in the church of Zagreb (Lukinović, *Povijesni spomenici*, vol. VII, 516 (1465): "Johannes Wythezych de Kamarcza," the only example I know when his name is written in the Slavic form).

1207 MNL OL, DL 103 765: "de consilio et voluntate honorabilis magistri Johannis Wythez de Kamarcza prepositi Waradiensis."

1208 The Zrednai belonged to a different, poorer stratum of the local nobility. Indeed, it can be put forward as a probable hypothesis that the name Vitéz, which was not used in the elder Vitéz's lifetime, shifted in fact from the younger John to the elder, as the former's prestige grew and he ascended the ecclesiastical hierarchy. This solution has already been proposed by Klára Csapodiné Gárdonyi, "Vitéz János neve" [The Name of John Vitéz], *Turul* 71 (1998): 1–2, 25–29.

studied in Italy, and died as provost of Zagreb in 1499. If our identification of bishop John with the John, son of Peter, who turns up in 1465 is correct, then he and Michael may have been brothers.<sup>1209</sup> Another man of letters from the same family was Nicholas Kamarcai, son of Ladislás.<sup>1210</sup> Since the father of this Ladislás was called Nicholas,<sup>1211</sup> he was evidently not identical with the son of viceban Stephen; he could be the son of either Nicholas son of Stephen, or rather that of Nicholas son of Michael.<sup>1212</sup> Between 1464 and 1481 he is frequently attested as a notary of the royal court, and in 1478 he is referred to as the deputy (*vicesgerens*) of the influential prothonotary of the palatine, John Korotnai.<sup>1213</sup> He also acted as a royal man as well as a special deputy in Slavonia,<sup>1214</sup> and took part in arbitrations.<sup>1215</sup> In May 1474 he was listed among the representatives of the Slavonian nobility. As late as 1487 we still find him in the company of the judge royal, Stephen Bátori, then staying in Transylvania.<sup>1216</sup>

Among the other members of the family in the second half of the fifteenth century, Andrew, Thomas and John occur frequently in the sources, mostly as *familiares* and neighbours. Andrew and Thomas were surely brothers,<sup>1217</sup> but it is not known who their father was; all three are sometimes referred to as the “sons of Vitéz”, such as in 1478 on the list of the Slavonian nobility. In 1469 Andrew Vitéz of Novaszentmárton is mentioned in connection with the anti-Ottoman mobilisation of the Slavonian nobility,<sup>1218</sup> whereas in 1476 John and

1209 Bishop John and provost Michael are regarded as the brothers of Janus Pannonius by Hrvoje Petrić, who accordingly proposed that the great poet should be called of Kamarca. See Hrvoje Petrić, “Was Janus Pannonius (1434–1472) actually born in Komarnica, Podravina?,” *Podravina – časopis za multidisciplinarna istraživanja*, vol. I. br. 1., Koprivnica 2002, 75–82. The proposal is rather absurd and certainly wrong. Let it suffice to remark here that the brother of Janus, called Michael, died already before 1458. On the other hand, he did have a cousin equally called Michael, the son of Peter; his mother was also called Barbara, who, however, cannot be confused with the mother of Janus, for, whereas the latter had died already in 1463, the other Barbara was still alive in 1481. Moreover, both sons of Peter Csezmicei remained in the world. On the Csezmicei family see Bálint Lakatos, “A Csezmiceiek. Adatok Janus Pannonius családjáról” [The Csezmicei. About the Family of Janus Pannonius], in *Magistrae discipuli. Tanulmányok Madas Edit tiszteletére* [Magistrae Discipuli. Studies in Honour of Edit Madas], ed. Előd Nemerkenyi (Budapest: OSZK–MTA ITI–MOKKA-R Egyesület, 2009), 181–92.

1210 In fact, he is never called Vitéz, but certainly belonged to the same kindred.

1211 MNL OL, DL 34 311.

1212 The son of Michael, Nicholas, is mentioned in 1411 as a *familiaris* of Martin Ders: *Zsigmond-kori Oklevéltár*, vol. III, no. 1083.

1213 See Bónis, *Jogtudó értelmiség*, 296 (n. 16).

1214 MNL OL, DL 103 789 (1476), DL 103 834 (1479).

1215 *Levéltári Közlemények* 13 (1935), 238 (1473); MNL OL, DL 100 851 (1475).

1216 *Somogy Megye Múltjából* 14 (1983), no. 143.

1217 MNL OL, DF 276 827 (1475): “Andrea Wythezfy, Thoma fratre eiusdem, Johanne Wythezfy de Kernyn alias de dicta Jakozerdahel.”

1218 MNL OL, DL 17 204: “Andreas Vitez de Novazenthmarthon unacum suis peditibus et equitibus.”

Thomas Vitéz, likewise called of Novaszentmárton, are listed among the *familiares* of George Forster, castellan of Szentgyörgyvár,<sup>1219</sup> but later they may have subjected themselves immediately to the Ernuszt family, as did John Kamarcai.<sup>1220</sup> Ladislás Kamarcai was designated as a royal man in 1481.<sup>1221</sup> In the same year at the congregation of Zagreb, alongside the wife of John Vitéz of Kernin, who was proscribed for concubinage with the parish priest of Mindszent, Ladislás Tulovai was also put on the list for homicide.<sup>1222</sup> At Tulova John Vitéz had a *castellum* in 1490, which is mentioned in the report on a violent assault launched by the Ernuszt brothers against the Szerdahelyi family.<sup>1223</sup> Whether this John can be identified as the master John Kamarcai who appears in 1489 as a notary of the royal court,<sup>1224</sup> and is later frequently attested as a special man sent from the banal seat,<sup>1225</sup> and then turns up several times in different missions in the accounts of treasurer Sigismund Ernuszt,<sup>1226</sup> is not sure; what is beyond doubt is that the fact that in 1479 and 1480 some banal charters, confirmed with the seal of the ispán of Zagreb, were issued at Tulova, should be connected to either Nicholas or John Kamarcai.<sup>1227</sup> The daughter of John (or of one of the two, if they are not one and the same person), called Veronica, married Francis Ostfi of Asszonyfalva, a well-to-do nobleman from the county of Vas, who was alispán of the county of Sopron, and king Wladislaw II appointed him as ispán of the same county in 1506.<sup>1228</sup> With this marriage Francis also obtained portions at Kernin,<sup>1229</sup> although he was obliged to quarrel with John Ernuszt and Michael Kerhen for them; the latter occupied some of the Kamarcai lands after marrying the widow of John Vitéz.

The son of John, Michael Vitéz, brother of Veronica, entered the church, and in 1502 was already canon and archdeacon in the bishopric of Veszprém.<sup>1230</sup> In 1504 he pledged all his portions in the Kamarcai lands to his sister and her husband for a thousand florins.<sup>1231</sup> He is generally thought to have been the

1219 MNL OL, DL 103 785, DL 103 786.

1220 MNL OL, DF 262 134. In 1488 he is still in the service of the Ernuszt family: DF 262 151. Novaszentmárton is certainly identical with the Kerninszentmárton mentioned in 1431 (DL 103 552), and is called Plavnicaszentmárton in 1524 (DF 277 175/273 ecw).

1221 MNL OL, DL 34 311.

1222 Tringli, "Szlavóniai közgyűlés," 316.

1223 *Somogy Megye Múltjából* 4, no. 8 (1973).

1224 Iván Borsa ed., *A Justh család levéltára 1274–1525* [The Charters of the Justh Family] (Budapest: Akadémiai, 1991), no. 370.

1225 MNL OL, DL 68 716 (1493), DF 231 904 (1495).

1226 Engel, *Geschichte*, 47, 48, 49, 140 (here as tax collector in the county of Abaúj).

1227 MNL OL, DF 275 078.

1228 MNL OL, DL 86 434. See also in chapter 2.2.51. below.

1229 Adamček–Kampuš, *Popisi*, 28.

1230 MNL OL, DL 86 427. The charter is damaged, so the exact title of Michael cannot be read, but it can be reconstructed from the charter cited in the next note.

1231 MNL OL, DL 46 668. In this charter he is called Wythez de Kamaria, which is surely an error. There existed a Slavonian family called Vitéz of Kamarja, which, however, had nothing to do with the Kamarcai.

nephew of bishop John Vitéz the younger, which sufficiently accounts for his ecclesiastical career and his appearance in the church of Veszprém. Indeed, he seems to have gone there together with his uncle, for previously he had been canon at Várad, presumably in connection with the provostship of John Vitéz the younger. Archdeacon of Buda from at least 1498, he then emerges as Hungarian confessor of the Saint Peter cathedral at Rome.<sup>1232</sup> After his return he also became archdeacon of Szabolcs and canon of Eger. In 1524 he was already provost of the Saint Nicholas collegiate chapter at Székesfehérvár.<sup>1233</sup>

In 1502 among those in the name of whom provost Michael put forward his protest was Vitus Garázda of Kamarca, his *frater*, who seems to have been the most outstanding member of the family around the turn of the century. In 1502 he is called the son of Peter, and is co-possessing the village of Palicsnaszentpéter (Severin/Polična, CRO) together with other members of the Kamarcai family. In 1465 two Peters are mentioned, yet their sons are then called John and Andrew respectively,<sup>1234</sup> consequently, Vitus cannot be linked to any of the branches of the family,<sup>1235</sup> nor is it known whence his sobriquet Garázda, never used by his kinsmen, originated. All we know is that in 1495 the majority of the Kamarcai lands were registered in his possession.<sup>1236</sup> It was not only the bulk of the family possessions that he held in his hands, moreover: before 1495 he had married the daughter of John Kéméndi of the Győr kindred, and obtained with her hands portions in at least ten villages in the county of Baranya.<sup>1237</sup>

In 1495 he was already one of the chief *familiares* of bishop Sigismund of Pécs.<sup>1238</sup> Presumably after the fall of the bishop from the royal grace he joined duke John Corvin, whose castellan at Rakonok he was in 1498.<sup>1239</sup> In 1502 he

1232 Bálint Lakatos, “Kálnai Imre főesperesi és királyi titkári kinevezése (1523–1525). Adalékok a pápaság magyar személyi politikájához Mohács előtt” [The Appointment of Emeric Kálnai as Archdeacon and Royal Secretary (1523–1525). On the Personal Politics of the Papacy in Hungary before 1526], *Századok* 144 (2010): 415, and n. 23. On the career of Michael see József Köblös, *Az egyházi középréteg Mátyás és a Jagellók korában* [The Ecclesiastical Middle Class in the Age of Matthias and the Jagiellonians] (Budapest: MTA Történettudományi Intézete, 1994), 376–77, who, however, also treats him as belonging to the Zrednai family.

1233 MNL OL, DF 229 763. Both John Vitéz the younger and Michael Vitéz were famous humanists, educated in Italy, but an exposition of their literary activities has been regarded as outside the remit of the present book.

1234 MNL OL, DF 255 587.

1235 Of course, he may have been born after 1465, or still a minor at that time.

1236 Adamček–Kampuš, *Popisi*, 13, under the heading of Nowazenthmarthon.

1237 MNL OL, DF 260 410: “generum generose domine relice Johannis Kemendi;” DF 260 155: she is called Susan, the villages enumerated. See also DL 88 856. On the origins of the family see Engel, *Középkori magyar genealógia*, Győr nem 1. Óvári ág 1. tábla.

1238 MNL OL, DF 260 410: “egregium dominum Vitalem Garazda de Kamarcza [...] familiarem eiusdem domini nostri (sc. episcopi) specialem,” who “in continuis serviciis ipsius domini nostri occupari debet.”

1239 MNL OL, DF 232 986.

was still in ducal or royal service, for at that time he commanded 200 cavalry, with whom he descended upon the estates of bishop Luke of Zagreb.<sup>1240</sup> Early in 1506 he was appointed by bans Andrew Both and Mark Horvát as one of their Slavonian vicebans, but his service was cut short by his death sometime after 20 April in the same year. He seems to have died fairly young, or (re) married very late, for his son was a mere 8 years old, and each of his four daughters was younger.<sup>1241</sup> Akacius, who was sometimes titled *egregius*,<sup>1242</sup> married the daughter of George Kerecsényi, episcopal *vicarius* of Zagreb, and thus became the brother-in-law of viceban Paul Kerecsényi.<sup>1243</sup> In 1526 he was still recorded as having portions in seven villages, and a noble house at Podbrezje.<sup>1244</sup> He had a son called Francis and a daughter, Christine. His sister, Elisabeth, married Coloman Huszár of Debrék (from the county of Somogy).<sup>1245</sup>

Of course, other members of the Kamarcai family also remained active before and after the turn of the century. The sons of John Kamarcai, Andrew and Nicholas turn up here and there in the sources, but they remain no more than names to us;<sup>1246</sup> prior to 1498 Andrew was subjected to ecclesiastical punishment upon petition by the parish priest of Mindszent.<sup>1247</sup> In 1513 John Vitézfi is mentioned together with his sons, Louis and David, and Nicholas Vitézfi with his own called Caspar.<sup>1248</sup> Michael Kamarcai, who in 1493 is mentioned as a *familiaris* of Sigismund and John Ernuszt,<sup>1249</sup> may have been the brother of master Nicholas, but nothing is known about him thereafter. The same holds for the Francis of Tulova (*Thulowa*), who turns up once in the course of an inquisition in 1493, and surely belonged to the Kamarcai family.<sup>1250</sup> One Nicholas Vitéz, also identified as Kamarcai, was present with ban Egervári at Buda in March 1492, although his name, together with those of some of his companions, is missing from the charter of the Slavonian and Croatian estates.<sup>1251</sup>

Other members of the family also figure in our sources, but their identification is even more uncertain. Alongside Akacius Garázda, the sons of Ladislás Kamarcai, John, Nicholas and Martin also turn up occasionally in the

1240 MNL OL, DF 252 223.

1241 MNL OL, DL 104 160. In 1507 his widow had 19 tenant plots at Miglech.

1242 Eg. MNL OL, DL 33 909.

1243 MNL OL, DF 277 175/049 ecw.

1244 MNL OL, DF 277 175/595–99 ecw.

1245 MNL OL, DF 277 175/273 ecw. Stephen Huszár of Debrék is in the service of the Bátori family in 1522: DL 25 647.

1246 MNL OL, DF 233 293; DL 33 899.

1247 MNL OL, DL 86 422.

1248 MNL OL, DL 47 056.

1249 MNL OL, DF 255 915.

1250 MNL OL, DF 233 293: "Franciscus nobilis de Thulowa."

1251 MNL OL, DL 38 645.



1520s.<sup>1252</sup> This Nicholas, *egregius*, had a noble manor at Kamarca in 1524.<sup>1253</sup> It may have been either his father, Ladislav, or his namesake nicknamed “Kyzelica,”<sup>1254</sup> who was castellan of Szentgyörgyvár in the service of the Ernuszt family in 1523.<sup>1255</sup> John son of Ladislav entered the church,<sup>1256</sup> and (after Mohács, as it seems) became the chaplain of bishop Simon of Zagreb.<sup>1257</sup> In 1527 he was having portions at Alsó and Felsőkamarca, Zdelja and Tulova, which he then pledged to his own brother Nicholas.<sup>1258</sup>

## 2.2.22. Kapitánfi of Desnice (Kapitanić od Dišnika, Capithanfy de Desniche)

The oldest known male ancestor of the Kapitánfi family was apparently a certain Rodinus (Rodin, Raden) who seems to have lived around the turn of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.<sup>1259</sup> Unfortunately, it is impossible to identify him with any of the not too numerous persons bearing the name Rodin in the same period. The only possible exception is perhaps the *comes* Rodinus, who in 1289 sold some land to James, son of Blagonya before the chapter of Csázma.<sup>1260</sup> It seems that originally the family was named after the possession of Podgorja, where the Kasztellánfi of Szentlélek also had some portions, and they sometimes bore its name even in the fifteenth century.<sup>1261</sup> The possession of Desnice itself, however, was in the hands of people whose eventual relationship to Rodinus and his descendants cannot be established.<sup>1262</sup>

1252 MNL OL, DF 277 175/061 ecw: “Ladislaus de Kamarcza ac Johannes, Nicolaus et Martinus filii eiusdem.”

1253 MNL OL, DL 23 932.

1254 MNL OL, DF 232 673: “nobiles Ladislaum Kyzelycza de Kamarcza et Joseph filium suum.”

1255 MNL OL, DF 232 656.

1256 MNL OL, DF 277 175/587 ecw (1526): presbiter.

1257 MNL OL, DF 277 175/667 ecw: “Honorabilis et nobilis dominus Johannes de Kamarcza capellanus reverendissimi domini Simonis episcopi ecclesie Zagrabiensis.”

1258 Ibid.

1259 Smičiklas, *Codex diplomaticus*, vol. XI, 619: “nobilis vir magister Dominicus filius Rodini.”

1260 Ibid., vol. VI, 681.

1261 Ibid., vol. XIII, 300: “Dominicus filius Raden de possessione sua de eadem Podgoria;” *Zsigmondkori Oklevéltár*, vol. IV, no. 1039 (1413), where the name Rodynus returns once more; as late as 1436: “Stephano filio Blasii dicti Capitan de Podgorya” (MNL OL, DL 100 516).

1262 10 November 1256 (Smičiklas, *Codex diplomaticus*, vol. V, 27): “Petri, Gregorii, Martini, Bartholomei, Johannis et Dominici filiorum Berizlay [...], item prima meta tercie terre predictorum filiorum Berizlay que Disnicha vocatur;” 11 November 1256 [ibid., 38]: “ad tres metas, quarum una est Johannis, altera filiorum Berizlai [...], tercia Georgii Berivoy;” 1257 [ibid., 74]: “terras Desniche, Bursonouch, Pukur et Lunheta nuncupatas invenit per Martinum comitem filium Tusk jobagionem dicti castri [sc. Gerzenche] ab antiquo pacifice possideri.” This last charter seems to attest that these people were originally castle warriors (*várjobbágyok*), like their neighbours the Berivojszentiváni.

In the middle of the fourteenth century we see Bartholomew,<sup>1263</sup> son of Matthew “Cseh” and his own son, Paul, and Lőkös, son of Radek and his sons, Lawrence, Michael and John, likewise owning at Desnice, and the relationship of at least the latter to Rodinus can be demonstrated.<sup>1264</sup> In fact, in a charter certainly issued in the 1350s, which survives in a transcription from 1488, master Lőkös, son of Rodik is called of Desnice, and somewhat later our Rodinus is said to be his uterine brother.<sup>1265</sup> It is nevertheless conspicuous that Rodinus, whose son, Dominic, was beyond doubt a man of authority in the region, never turns up in the sources. What remains beyond doubt, however, is that none of the names Rodin(us), Rodik and Lőkös is very common in the region, but their eventual provenance should be left to be determined by further investigations.

In 1350 it was upon the request of Dominic, son of Rodinus, titled as *nobilis vir magister*, that the chapter of Csázma transcribed the decree of ban Matthew from 1273.<sup>1266</sup> Further information also seem to prove that Dominic already belonged to the noble élite of the region. In a lawsuit against the Berivojszentiváni brothers in 1353 he was represented by Mojs (Majos), son of Alexander, a member of the kin descended from palatine Mojs.<sup>1267</sup> The arbitrators elected in the same case by Dominic were James, provost of Zagreb, John, archdeacon of Gorica, and master John, son of John from the kin of Isaac.<sup>1268</sup> In 1354 Dominic himself was appointed as an arbitrator in the company of George, ducal prothonotary, Cosmas, his colleague in the service of the ban, and master John Hosszúbácsi from the Dorozsma kindred.<sup>1269</sup>

In 1394 Nicholas, son of Dominic was commissioned together with members of the Kasztellánfi, Szencsei and Nelepec families to testify in the case of the infidelity of Philip Csernarekai.<sup>1270</sup> One of his brothers, Paul was sentenced to capital punishment in 1404 for having joined the prior of Vrana, and his possessions were donated by king Sigismund to the sons of the third brother, Demetrius, who are for the first time called “sons of captain” (*fili capitan*). Since initially this name was apparently only used by the sons of Demetrius, it seems reasonable to suppose that it was Demetrius who acquired

1263 Royal (ducal) man in 1353 (Smičklas, *Codex diplomaticus*, vol. XI, 196).

1264 Ibid., vol. XIII, 300; *ibid.*, vol. XIV, 534–35 (1373): “Demetrio filio Dominici filii Roden de Podgorya et fratribus suis carnalibus ac Laurencio, Mychaele et Johanne filiis Bekus [*recte: Lekus!*] filii Radyk.”

1265 MNL OL, DL 101 049: “magister Leukeus filius Rodyk de Desnyche [...] predicto magistro Leukus et Rodyno fratri suo uterino;” DL 107 004 (1380): “possessionem Rypna alio nomine Myhalfelde vocatam apud manus filiorum Leukus filii Radyk de Desnycze.”

1266 Smičklas, *Codex diplomaticus*, vol. XI, 619.

1267 Ibid., vol. XII, 209–10.

1268 Ibid., vol. XII, 210–11.

1269 Ibid., vol. XII, 229, the name misread as Radou.

1270 Ibid., vol. XVII, 584.

the sobriquet, although it is impossible to tell how.<sup>1271</sup> Paul was granted pardon some months later, however, and his possessions restored to him.<sup>1272</sup> Consequently he disappears from Slavonia, to be followed by the sons of Nicholas in the 1440s,<sup>1273</sup> and only the descendants of Demetrius can be followed without any break into the sixteenth century.

Among his four sons, Stephen and Andrew married Elizabeth and Margaret respectively, both daughters of Dominic Podversai (Podvrško, CRO) from the neighbouring county of Pozsega.<sup>1274</sup> Andrew seems indeed to have moved to the possessions of his wife: for some years he was called of Kopanch/Kupanch, one of the villages belonging to the castle of Podversa,<sup>1275</sup> and in one case he was even referred to as Podversai.<sup>1276</sup> In 1411 he went together with his father-in-law to the Venetian war among the troops of bishop Eberhard,<sup>1277</sup> and in 1415 participated to the campaign launched by Sigismund to Bosnia.<sup>1278</sup> In the meantime he was viceban of Croatia in the service of Petermann Albeni.<sup>1279</sup> His brother Blaise was alispán of Valkó for the Újlaki brothers in 1415–1416.<sup>1280</sup> A certain Emeric, who married their cousin, the daughter of Paul, son of Dominic, and thus acquired portions in the estate of Desnice, was castellan of ban John Maróti, although it is not known in which among his castles.<sup>1281</sup>

The daughter of Blaise, Helen (Ilko) was the wife of the Croatian Domsa, viceban of Croatia in the 1420s and 1430s.<sup>1282</sup> Nothing is known about her brother, Stephen, who was the father of three sons, all of whom were esteemed members of the Slavonian nobility in the second half of the fifteenth century.

1271 In 1380 the sons of Dominic, son of Rodin are called of Desnicha (MNL OL, DL 100 174); in 1394 one of them, namely Nicholas, is still simply referred to as of Podgorja (Smičiklas, *Codex diplomaticus*, vol. XVII, 584). It is to be noted, however, that Demetrius does not occur in our sources, so it is possible that he was in fact absent from Slavonia for some time, and returned there with the name of *capitanus*, which he had obtained somewhere with services unknown to us. This, of course, is no more than a hypothesis.

1272 *Zsigmondkori Oklevéltár*, vol. II, no 5970.

1273 In October 1413 the two sons of Nicholas: Nicholas and Rodinus occur in the sources, the latter for the last time (*Zsigmondkori Oklevéltár*, vol. IV, no. 1039). Nicholas son of Nicholas is still alive in 1441 (*Levéltári Közlemények* 11 (1933): 81).

1274 *Zsigmondkori Oklevéltár*, vol. III, no. 2906.

1275 "In villa Kupanch vocata residens" (MNL OL, DF 230 948, abstract: *Zsigmondkori Oklevéltár*, vol. V, no. 1064); *ibid.*, vol. VI, no. 202.

1276 *Ibid.*, vol. VI, no. 108.

1277 *Ibid.*, vol. III, no. 727.

1278 *Ibid.*, vol. IX, 664: "in serviciis nostris regalibus videlicet in exercituali expedicione in anno 1415 preterito contra Hervoyam ducem instaurata existens."

1279 Engel, *Archontológia*, vol. I, 25.

1280 *Ibid.*, vol. I, 222 (not identified as Desnicei).

1281 MNL OL, DL 43 775. The charter mentions his *familiares* and *jobagiones* at John Maróti's possession of Peker, but no fortification is known to have stood then at Peker.

1282 Lajos Thallóczy and Samu Barabás eds., *A Frangepán család oklevéltára* [The Archives of the Frangepán Family], vol. I, 1133–1453 (Budapest: MTA, 1910), 337. Engel, *Archontológia*, vol. I, 26.

All we know is that he was present together with his kinsman, Nicholas son of Nicholas, at the assembly held by ban Matko Tallóci in 1439. Nor do we know how he had acquired the possessions in the county of Zala which in 1446 he gave to Clement Tapán.<sup>1283</sup>

His sons, Andrew, Stephen and George, who owned together the estate of Desnice and the *castellum* there, were sentenced to loss of property against Matthew Maróti at the banal court in 1467, but seem this time to have survived the affair unharmed.<sup>1284</sup> In 1474 Andrew was one of the envoys sent by the Slavonian nobility to king Matthias.<sup>1285</sup> At that time he may already have stayed in the service of bishop Oswald of Zagreb, where he is attested a year later.<sup>1286</sup> Sometime before 10 January 1477 he was appointed by Ladislav Egervári as his viceban of Slavonia. He held the office first together with Ladislav Szencsei, and later with Peter Bocskai. His fate was sealed, however, when he married the widow of Nicholas Pozsegai, and moved to her *castellum* of Garignica.<sup>1287</sup> For king Matthias decided to donate the estate to an Italian follower of his wife, called Sabatinus Viola, and accordingly ordered Andrew Kapitánfi to hand it over immediately to the royal commissioner. Andrew made desperate efforts in order to save his new acquisition, going to Buda in the first days of March 1482, then, having left emptyhanded, turned to his lord, ban Egervári for help. All was in vain, however, and finally Balthasar Batthyány occupied the castle of Garignica upon royal orders, and he also received from Matthias the portions of Andrew at Desnice, confiscated for infidelity. Andrew, at least according to his own version of the story, was even compelled to leave Hungary together with his son for some time.

Although Andrew Kapitánfi was granted royal pardon in December 1483, and was allowed to try to reobtain his family possessions through legal procedure, he had no time to bring the case to completion. It was his son, Matthias, who finally made an agreement with Batthyány and his father-in-law, Ladislav Hermanfi: he was given back some of the portions of his father at Desnice, and contracted in return a treaty of mutual inheritance with his opponents. The treaty became valid when John, the son of Matthias Kapitánfi died heirless, although Balthasar Batthyány did run into some difficulties then while trying to gather in his lawful inheritance.<sup>1288</sup>

Not counting the unwanted "cohabitation" at Desnice with Batthyány and Hermanfi, the political misfortune of Andrew Kapitánfi did not entail disastrous consequences for his two brothers. At the very time of the affair George Kapitánfi was staying at Bihać likewise in the service of ban Ladislav

1283 Csánki, *Történelmi földrajz*, vol. III, 158. I was unable to find the original document.

1284 MNL OL, DL 106 998.

1285 Kukuljević, *Jura regni*, part II, 211–12.

1286 MNL OL, DF 261 839.

1287 MNL OL, DL 103 890.

1288 On the whole case, with all the references, see Pálosfalvi, "Grebbei Hermanfi," I, 857–63.

Egervári.<sup>1289</sup> In January 1487 we find him at Buda as one of the envoys authorised by the Slavonian nobility to negotiate with bishop Oswald.<sup>1290</sup> One and a half year later, in July 1488 he was again busily engaged in the same matter, this time at Vienna, the new capital of king Matthias.<sup>1291</sup> In March 1494 he was sent, together with George Szencsei, by the Slavonian nobility to king Wladislaw,<sup>1292</sup> and in 1496 he was likewise member of the delegation sent to the king to petition the renovation of the coat of arms of Slavonia.<sup>1293</sup> In the meantime he had been member of the group of arbitrators mediating between George Kasztellánfi and Francis Beriszló at Körös.<sup>1294</sup> In a letter from 1494 he called George Kanizsai his lord, and four years later he apparently still stayed in his service.<sup>1295</sup> Much less is known about the third brother, Stephen: in August 1479 he was leading the troops of count Charles of Corbavia, presumably in connection with the great Ottoman raid of that year.<sup>1296</sup> On one occasion, in 1484, he even turns up as a royal man in a case concerning Stephen Csupor.<sup>1297</sup> One of the two surviving brothers seems to have served ban Ladislas Egervári in 1492, but it is impossible to know which of them.<sup>1298</sup>

George Kapitánfi married Dorothy Kakas of Sokló, daughter of Paul, from the county of Somogy.<sup>1299</sup> No children born from this marriage seem to have come to adulthood, if there were any. In 1521 Dorothy declared before the convent of Somogy her intention to join the Dominican nunnery on the Island of Rabbits.<sup>1300</sup> The marriage of Stephen with Margaret Roh of Décsé<sup>1301</sup> was much more prolific: at least three sons: Thomas, Caspar and Sylvester,<sup>1302</sup> and three daughters were born to them. About the sons we know almost

1289 MNL OL, DL 102 216.

1290 MNL OL, DF 268 110.

1291 MNL OL, DF 268 111.

1292 Kukuljević, *Iura regni*, part II, 228–29.

1293 Ibid., 234.

1294 MNL OL, DF 231 944.

1295 MNL OL, DL 102 281: asks Balthasar Batthyány “quod nobis a domino nostro videlicet magnifico domino Georgio de Kanisa sanitati eius et ibi nunc est ad noticiam dare velitis.” DL 108 324: in his letter to George Kasztellánfi he refers to “dominus noster et vester,” which makes clear that he cannot be other than George Kanizsai, whose deputy Kasztellánfi was at that time.

1296 MNL OL, DL 102 201 (around August 15, 1479): “egregius Stephanus Capitanfy de Desnycze [...] quasdam gentes exercitiales homines videlicet magnifici domini Karoli groff dicti de Korbawya [...] conduxisset.”

1297 MNL OL, DF 255 889.

1298 MNL OL, DL 38 645.

1299 MNL OL, DL 50 352 (1464): daughter of Paul Kakas of Sokló; DL 24 033: “Paulo Kakas de Soklo aliter de Ewrs;” DL 23 588 (1521): “Domina Dorothea relicta quondam Georgii Kapythanffy de Desnycze filia videlicet olim Pauli Kakas de dicta Soklyo.” Her first husband was Albert Nagy, captain of Belgrade, who may have been called of Örs (Ewrs) precisely because of his marriage with Dorothy: DL 101 549.

1300 See the last charter cited in the previous note.

1301 MNL OL, DL 103 787: the daughter of Ladislas Roh.

1302 MNL OL, DL 107 065 (1486).

nothing, except that they all seem to have died fairly young.<sup>1303</sup> Sylvester, whose widow, Catherine Bevenyöd married John Szencsei, also had a son equally called Sylvester, who, however, died before 1519.<sup>1304</sup> Among the daughters, Catherine married Peter Simonfi of Tapolcaszentgyörgy, a neighbouring nobleman of modest wealth, Sophie became the wife of Michael Dombai of the Győr kindred, whereas Potenciana married Ladislás Becsevölgyi, member of an exceptionally widespread noble family from the county of Zala, who had somehow acquired portions in the estate of Berivojszentiván.<sup>1305</sup>

The line of Andrew Kapitánfi equally died out before Mohács. The only known son of Andrew himself, called Matthias, married a woman of unknown origins, named Catherine, and had a son called John, who must have died young.<sup>1306</sup> This means that the whole branch descended from Demetrius disappeared by the early sixteenth century, and was only continued on the female line by the three daughters of Stephen Kapitánfi and their children in case they had any.

The entire Kapitánfi family was not extinct, however. It is quite unexpectedly that a certain Paul Kapitánfi appears in the 1480s, not in Slavonia, it is true, but in the county of Bács. In 1480 he was *officialis* of the nuns of the Island of Rabbits in the important market town of Szond.<sup>1307</sup> He owned a portion of Jakabfalwa in the county of Bács, and in 1488 he is recorded to have held some land in the county of Csanád as well.<sup>1308</sup> His wife was a local noblewoman called Justine Fűrfalvi.<sup>1309</sup> Thirty years later we meet Vitus Kapitánfi of Desnice among the neighbours of the possessions of Louis Sulyok of Lekcse in the county of Bács.<sup>1310</sup> In the next year this same Vitus Kapitánfi appears as of Dóka (*de Doka*), and the possession of Kiszető in the county of Temes is identified as his place of residence.<sup>1311</sup> In 1519 it is revealed that this Vitus was in fact the son of Paul Kapitánfi,<sup>1312</sup> and they owned portions in a

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1303 Thomas and Sylvester were still alive in 1512 (MNL OL, DL 101 440), when they made an accord with Balthasar Batthyány before the chapter of Csázma with regard to the portions of the late Andrew Kapitánfi in the estate of Desnice. By 1515, however, both had died without offspring, for then their portions at Desnice were donated by king Wladislaw II to Michael Pálóci and Ladislás Kanizsai (DL 101 481). In 1524 the widow of Thomas Kapitánfi tried to alienate her dower to Balthasar Batthyány the younger: DF 277 175/118–19.

1304 MNL OL, DL 101 531. On John Szencsei see section on the Szencsei family.

1305 MNL OL, DL 101 481.

1306 MNL OL, DL 101 077, DL 101 531.

1307 MNL OL, DL 18 438: "Paulus Kapithanfy officialis [...] in opido ipsarum (sc. sanctimonialium) Zond vocato."

1308 *Hazai Okmánytár*, vol. V, 366–68.

1309 Lawrence Fűrfalvi was alispán of Bodrog in the early 1390s: Engel, *Archontológia*, vol. I, 115.

1310 MNL OL, DL 23 220 (1519).

1311 MNL OL, DL 23 437: "possessionem Kyzethew predictam consequenterque domum et habitacionem annotati Viti Kapythan."

1312 MNL OL, DL 101 538.



handful of villages in the three neighbouring counties of Bács, Csanád and Temes. He must also have owned some land in the county of Bodrog, for which he was one of the envoys at the assembly of Tolna in 1518.<sup>1313</sup> But how did they get there? There is no answer to this question, but the relationship between them and the Slavonian Kapitánfi is evident, for when the latter became extinct by 1520, Vitus Kapitánfi appeared together with his two sons, Stephen and George in Slavonia and claimed their share in the estate of Desnice. In 1525 they were still quarrelling with Balthasar Batthyány in this matter.<sup>1314</sup> It is surely this Stephen, son of Vitus, who married after Mohács Barbara Szencsei.<sup>1315</sup> It is in fact very probable that this branch of the family descended from the Paul who had been punished for infidelity in 1404, but as yet there is no way of proving this hypothesis.

### 2.2.23. Kasztellánfi of Szentlélek (Kaštelanović od Svetog Duha, Castellanfy, Kastellanffy de Zenthlelek)<sup>1316</sup>

The ancestor of the family, the Italian Peter, came to Slavonia from Seravalle in Italy<sup>1317</sup> sometime before 1320. He married Anne, the daughter of Paul Pekri of the Tétény kindred, and thus obtained portions of the extensive Pekri lands, namely the possession of Szentlélek and that of Dimicskfölde (Dimičkovina, Ljudevit Selo, CRO). Peter, who for some time was ispán of the "county" of Csázma,<sup>1318</sup> soon acquired other lands, such as Kiskutenica and Podgorja in the district of Gerzence.<sup>1319</sup> Although Peter was later remembered to have been of non noble birth,<sup>1320</sup> in the 1340s he was titled both noble and master;<sup>1321</sup> it is open to question what role in this and in the further rise of his descendants was played by his marriage with a woman belonging to one of the most illustrious and richest kindreds of Slavonia.

One of his sons, Ladislav, who married from the Bosnian Hrvatinić family, probably acquainted himself with Nicholas Szécsi during the latter's banship in Slavonia, and later followed him to Hungary and became his alispán of

1313 Szabó, *Magyar országgyűlések*, 133.

1314 MNL OL, DL 101 590.

1315 Klaić, "Plemici Svetački," 46.

1316 See most recently Maček–Jurković, *Rodoslov plemića*. This book, rich in information, suffers from two basic weaknesses. Firstly, it relies almost exclusively on charters which are currently preserved in Croatian archives. Secondly, it adopts somewhat uncritically information from old and dated Croatian works. I will reflect on the consequences of these weaknesses in the footnotes.

1317 Today Vittorio Veneto.

1318 Engel, *Archontológia*, vol. II, 125.

1319 Smičiklas, *Codex diplomaticus*, vol. XI, 505–06.

1320 MNL OL, DL 11 606 (1424): "Petro dicto Castellan [...] homini utputa ignobili et impossessionato."

1321 *Zsigmondkori oklevéltár*, vol. XI, no. 505: "nobilis vir magister Petrus dictus Castellan."

Pressburg.<sup>1322</sup> In 1384 he was still staying in Hungary, for in that year he made an accord before the chapter of Fehérvár with another *familiaris* of Nicholas Szécsi, master John Besenyő, according to which they would divide between each other all their lands already possessed and those to be acquired later in the county of Gerzence.<sup>1323</sup> Both master Ladislás and his brothers joined king Sigismund right in the beginning of his reign, and although their lands were consequently devastated by the king's opponents, their decision paid off abundantly later. First they were accorded as a compensation by king Sigismund the right to hold a fair on their possession of Dimicskfölde.<sup>1324</sup> Somewhat later, before 1390, they received the possession of Rosecsnik (Roždanik, CRO), forfeited by a member of the Tibold kindred for infidelity.<sup>1325</sup> They were also granted further lands in the counties of Dubica and Gerzence, which they exchanged in 1391 with Denis, archdeacon of Kamarca.<sup>1326</sup> Among Ladislás's brothers, Emeric joined the church and became canon first of Óbuda then of Zagreb.<sup>1327</sup> Nicholas as a member of the royal court was among those nobles who confirmed the treaty of inheritance which king Sigismund contracted with duke Albert of Habsburg in 1402 at Pressburg.<sup>1328</sup> The fourth brother, Adam (Stephen) joined Nicholas Garai and became his castellan of Knin, then functioned as viceban of Slavonia during the banship of Paul of Peč, a kinsman of the wife of Adam's brother, Ladislás, in 1404–1405.<sup>1329</sup>

Their unbroken fidelity during the crisis of 1403 naturally resulted in further land acquisitions. The most important among them was the confiscated wealth of John Szencsei, which, however, proved too big to digest immediately. Szencsei was soon pardoned by king Sigismund, and his estates given back to him. As a result of compromise, the Szencsei could retain Szencse itself and the castle of Fejérkő, whereas the Kasztellánfi brothers remained in the possession of Szircs (Sirač, CRO) and of the *castellum* there, and received two further possessions from the king as a compensation.<sup>1330</sup> In 1423 Ladislás, the son of John Szencsei, and Caspar, the son of Ladislás, who had been minors at the time of the original agreement, confirmed it before the chapter of Csázma.<sup>1331</sup> It was also lands confiscated for infidelity that Peter son of Adam

1322 Engel, *Archontológia*, vol. I, 168.

1323 MNL OL, DL 34 673.

1324 Smičiklas, *Codex diplomaticus*, vol. XVII, 143.

1325 Ibid., vol. XVII, 278–280.

1326 Ibid., vol. XVII, 402–04.

1327 Maček–Jurković, *Rodoslov plemića*, 68–71.

1328 Pál Lővei, "Az ország nagyjainak és előkelőinek 1402. évi oklevelén függő pecséték" [The Seals Attached to the Charter of the Hungarian Barons and Nobles Issued in 1402], in *Honoris causa*, ed. Tibor Neumann and György Rác, 168.

1329 Engel, *Archontológia*, vol. II, 125.

1330 Klaić, "Plemići Svetački," 24–25. See below the section on the Szencsei family.

1331 Ibid., 26.

was granted on the appurtenances of Kristallóc, but he apparently never managed to put his hands upon them.<sup>1332</sup>

In the next generation the accumulation of land gave way to strife within the family and even some losses were on the accounts. From the portion of Nicholas, who had no male heir, the daughters' quarter was given to Peter Füzesdi, husband of his only daughter, Elisabeth.<sup>1333</sup> From 1416 we have the first trace of members of the two remaining branches, Sigismund and Caspar, sons of Ladislás on the one hand, and Peter son of Adam on the other, quarrelling over the family property, a problem which became acute thereafter.<sup>1334</sup> Nevertheless, they persevered in the service of king Sigismund, in some cases together. Thus, whereas in 1417 Peter, son of Adam was castellan of Orbász (Vrbaški grad, BH) in the service of the Albeni family,<sup>1335</sup> in 1421 all three marched among the troops of Pipo Ozorai to the war against the Hussites.<sup>1336</sup> This shift of allegiance is explained by the fact that Peter had started his career as episcopal *vicarius* of bishop Andrew Scolari of Zagreb.<sup>1337</sup>

Sigismund married one of the daughters of James the "Italian" of Orbona, but, together with his brother-in-law, Herman Grebeni, proved unable to obtain the Orbonai inheritance, which king Sigismund wanted to give to John Maróti. Instead, they received together the portions of Thomas Cigány in the estates of Berivojszentiván and Mecsénice.<sup>1338</sup> Despite this failure, Sigismund also made an attempt to get portions from the ancient Pekri lands, which in the meantime had gone to John Maróti, by right of filial quarter; his efforts of course yielded no result.<sup>1339</sup> Peter married Helen Atyinai, daughter of Nicholas Atyinai from the Aba kindred, and thus temporarily acquired portions in the Atyinai lands, among them on the appurtenances of Atyina itself.<sup>1340</sup> After the death of Pipo Ozorai he returned to bishop John of Zagreb and functioned as his *vicarius* until 1433.<sup>1341</sup> In 1432 Peter, three years later his cousin Caspar launched a new campaign in order to obtain all the Szencsei lands, but none

1332 *Zsigmondkori Oklevéltár*, vol. II/1, no. 4831.

1333 *Ibid.*, vol. VI, no. 664.

1334 *Ibid.*, vol. V, no. 2501.

1335 Engel, *Archontológia*, vol. I, 381.

1336 *Zsigmondkori Oklevéltár*, vol. VIII, no. 887. In 1419 they may also have taken part in the Venetian war, because their suit against the monks of Garics was then prorogated upon royal order. *Ibid.*, vol. VII, no. 425.

1337 Engel, *Archontológia*, vol. I, 80.

1338 *Zsigmondkori Oklevéltár*, vol. IX, no. 755.

1339 MNL OL, DL 11 606.

1340 MNL OL, DL 88 052: five villages "ad sexaginta jobagiones extendentes." It remained in the family's possession until its extinction: DF 282 508: "Hum: relicte Akaczii cessit Benedicti de Bathyan ad Athynam et nullam habet dicam."

1341 Engel, *Archontológia*, vol. I, 80.

of them succeeded.<sup>1342</sup> In April 1430 at Semppte (Šintava, SL) Caspar received from king Sigismund a license to erect a fortification on his estate of Szircs.<sup>1343</sup>

When the Tallóci brothers gradually took over the government of Slavonia after 1433, all three male members of the Kasztellánfi family joined them and even became their main supporters there. Soon after his appointment as ban Matko Tallóci made Peter Kasztellánfi his viceban, a post he shared apparently from the beginning of 1439 with Herman Grebeni. He also appears as member of the immediate entourage of ban Matko.<sup>1344</sup> Caspar was one of the collectors of the “fiftieth” tax in 1436,<sup>1345</sup> whereas his brother, Sigismund was castellan of Béla (Pusta Bela, CRO) in the service of Matko Tallóci.<sup>1346</sup> During the civil strife which followed the double royal election in 1440, they all remained faithful to Tallóci and consequently to Wladislaw I. In the first critical months of the new king’s reign Caspar played a leading role in keeping and reinforcing the Slavonian nobility in their fidelity towards Wladislaw I,<sup>1347</sup> and took part at the head of his own troops in the king’s Transdanubian campaign in the early spring of 1441. In return, his lands were exempted lifelong from taxpaying by Wladislaw. In March 1442 he was captured together with Frank Tallóci while provisioning the Bosnian castle of Szrebernik (Srebrenik, BH), then under siege by the Ottomans.<sup>1348</sup> After his liberation he returned to Buda and was soon sent back by the king and his council to the Ottoman emperor on a diplomatic mission. His brother, Sigismund was still alive then, but seems to have died soon thereafter, just like their cousin Peter.<sup>1349</sup>

Despite the material and personal sacrifices he had made in the service of the Tallóci brothers, in 1447 Caspar became the Slavonian viceban of the counts of Cilli, who had played a dominant role in the disappearance of the surviving Tallóci brothers after 1445. He married Jacoma, the sister of the Italian Tulbert of Prata, from whom he had but a daughter called Helen.<sup>1350</sup> In 1459 king Matthias allowed him to dispose freely of his lands in the county of Pozsega,<sup>1351</sup> but shortly before his death, in 1465 he was sentenced to loss of property against Gregory Dersanóci, prothonotary of the judge royal. The reason seems to have been that he had been unable to protect Gregory in some pieces of land that he had ceded to him in Körös, and his heirs, Ladislas and Nicholas, sons of Sigismund, consequently had to content the prothonotary

1342 MNL OL, DL 74 485, DL 74 492.

1343 MNL OL, DF 231 096.

1344 MNL OL, DL 44 302 (October 1, 1440, Grubesnic): “Relatio Petri Ade.”

1345 *Levéltári Közlemények* 3 (1925): 139.

1346 MNL OL, DL 44 302.

1347 MNL OL, DF 252 397.

1348 On the date see Pálosfalvi, “Cilleiek és Tallóciak,” 61, and n. 94.

1349 Maček-Jurković, *Rodoslov plemića*, 87, 99. Yet in the charter referred to by the authors here Peter is not called viceban (“Petro filio Ade de Zenthlelek,” MNL OL, DL 13 616).

1350 Jacoma was in fact his second wife: it is unknown which family the first, called Helen, belonged to. Maček-Jurković, *Rodoslov plemića*, 93–95.

1351 Stipišić-Šamšalović, *Isprave*, no. 2425. I was unable to find the original of this charter.

by conferring upon him and his heirs all their rights in their possessions in Pozsega.<sup>1352</sup>

Very little is known about the two sons of Sigismund who are only known to have come to adulthood. As for Ladislás, all we know is that he married Anne, the daughter of John Provcsai (Provča, CRO) (and of Catherine Podversai),<sup>1353</sup> who in the early 1450s was alispán in Pozsega for John Kórógyi.<sup>1354</sup> His brother, Nicholas served for some time Nicholas Újlaki,<sup>1355</sup> and it may have been him, and not the son of Peter in the other branch, who acted as one of the representatives of the Slavonian nobility in February 1457 at Buda.<sup>1356</sup> Still in the same year he received together with his brother Ladislás and their uncle Caspar a new donation concerning all the Kasztellánfi lands, against which Nicholas, son of Peter protested immediately before the chapter of Zagreb.<sup>1357</sup> Nicholas married Anne, the sister and heiress of Peter Bikszádi, whose possessions thus devolved upon their son, George Kasztellánfi.<sup>1358</sup>

We are much better informed about the descendants of Adam, whose story we will now follow until their extinction before returning to the other branch, which survived 1526. The only known son of Peter and Helen Atyinaí, Nicholas, followed in the footsteps of his father and became viceban of Slavonia sometime before 10 March 1458. His lord was ban John Vitovec, whom he continued to serve until early in 1461, that is, even after the ban went into open rebellion against king Matthias. Nevertheless, his name was not added to the list of leading *familares* of Vitovec whom the king pardoned in 1463. In May 1465 he was sent together with Ladislás Hermanfi by the Slavonian nobility to king Matthias in order to have their privileges confirmed.<sup>1359</sup> In 1466 he returned again to the office of viceban in the service of Vitovec,<sup>1360</sup> and in August of that year he was member of the committee

1352 MNL OL, DF 231 507.

1353 Maček–Jurković, *Rodoslov plemića*, 110. Engel, *Középkori magyar genealógia*, Borics nem 1. Podversai. This Ladislás was surely not viceban either in 1449 (Maček–Jurković, *Rodoslov plemića*, 108), when the office was held by his kinsman Caspar and Benedict Turóci, or later.

1354 Engel, *Archontológia*, vol. I, 165.

1355 *Levéltári Közlemények* 3 (1925): 107 (April 1451): “Relatio Nicolai filii Castellan de Zenthlelek.”

1356 MNL OL, DF 268 080: Nicolaus de Zenthlylek.

1357 MNL OL, DF 231 395. Following the abstract published in Stipišić–Šamšalović, *Isprave* (no. 2359) a *castellum* called Vrana was listed among the *castella* of medieval Hungary (Tibor Koppány, *A középkori Magyarország kastélyai* [The Castella in Medieval Hungary] (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1999), 245). The charter says, however “castrum in predicta Zyrch et Wrane castellum in pertinenciis dicte possessionis Zenthlylek habita,” which means that the latter was identical with the *castellum* otherwise referred to as Szentlélek.

1358 Maček–Jurković, *Rodoslov plemića*, 113–16. See the above chapter on the Bikszádi family.

1359 MNL OL, DF 268 083.

1360 The charter according to which he was viceban in 1456 (MNL OL, DL 103 640), is indeed dated to that year, but was in fact issued in 1466. Nicholas Szentléleki and John Macedóniai figure as vicebans on 14 June 1466 as well (DL 45 213), and the szolgabíró who appears in

delegated by the Slavonian nobility for the negotiations with bishop Oswald.<sup>1361</sup> He died soon afterwards, however, but his place was immediately taken by his son, Akacius, whose mother was Helen, daughter of Herman Grebeni.<sup>1362</sup> He also served ban Vitovec, whereas his fellow-viceban was his own uncle, Ladislav Hermanfi. After the death of Vitovec Akacius left as a matter of fact his office, but seems to have remained close to the court: in April and August 1472 we find him at Buda, on the second occasion in the company of other Slavonian noblemen,<sup>1363</sup> and he died sometime after December 1478<sup>1364</sup> in royal service in the castle of Novi (CRO), perhaps in connection with the campaign of king Matthias against the Frangepán family.<sup>1365</sup>

At the time of his father's death Nicholas, son of Akacius was still a minor, and his tutor became Albert Lónyai, who had married his mother, Elisabeth Csapi.<sup>1366</sup> With this marriage Lónyai obtained much of the Kasztellánfi lands, and he apparently held them undisturbed until the mid-1490s, when his stepson, having come to adulthood, set about reclaiming the paternal estates. Lónyai, who was then castellan of the important castle of Pekrec (Pakrac, CRO) in the service of Bartholomew Drágfi, at first opposed, but then returned the Kasztellánfi lands to his stepson.<sup>1367</sup> Nicholas entered the service of the Kanizsai family: in 1512, and apparently in 1515 as well, he was castellan of Vasmegyericse for Clara Rozgonyi, widow of George.<sup>1368</sup> From his marriage with Sophie Tulbertfi<sup>1369</sup> no children survived, which seems to account for the fact that before December 1506 he alienated all his possessions to his brother-in-law, Benedict Batthyány, husband of his sister, Margaret.<sup>1370</sup>

A more important figure than Nicholas seems to have been his kinsman from the other branch of the family, George son of Nicholas. Although he retained portions of the ancient Kasztellánfi lands as well, he was frequently

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the charter, Paul Tersek of Gatalovc, held his office from 1466 on. The false piece of information, cited by Engel, *Archontológia*, vol. I, 22, is taken over by Maček-Jurković, *Rodoslov plemića*, 122 as well.

1361 MNL OL, DF 252 046.

1362 MNL OL, DF 231 687.

1363 MNL OL, DL 103 736 (Pledges land to Ladislav Hermanfi); DL 17 355.

1364 This is the last time he is attested alive: MNL OL, DF 231 687. In July 1483 his widow is mentioned.

1365 MNL OL, DL 104 051: "egregius Nicolaus Akacii Ade de Zenthlylek, cuius genitor in fidelibus famulatibus felicitis reminiscencie quondam Mathie regis in castro finitimo Novi appellato vita excessit." On the campaign see: Zsuzsa Teke, "Az itáliai államok és Mátyás" [The Italian States and King Matthias], in *Hunyadi Mátyás. Emlékkönyv Mátyás király halálának 500. évfordulójára*, 253.

1366 And not Istvánfi, as maintained by Maček-Jurković, *Rodoslov plemića*, 146. See the section on Albert Lónyai.

1367 Ibid.

1368 MNL OL, DL 25 544 (1512); Maček-Jurković, *Rodoslov plemića*, 176 (1515).

1369 Ibid., 176.

1370 *Somogyi Megye Múltjából* 14 (1983), no. 158.



called of his new possession of Bikszád.<sup>1371</sup> He probably started his career in the service of duke Lawrence Újlaki, whose castellan at Kontovc he was in 1493 and 1494.<sup>1372</sup> However, he left his lord before the revolt of the latter, and thus managed to retain the royal favour. In the course of the year 1494 he was probably already in the king's entourage, as two royal charters, issued on his behalf at Tokaj and Pétervárad (Petrovaradin, SRB) respectively, attest.<sup>1373</sup> Somewhat later George joined the retinue of duke John Corvin, however, and this decision may have contributed to the temporary loss of his possessions.<sup>1374</sup> As we will see below, in 1496 he was sentenced together with his kinsman, Nicholas, and with members of the Pekri family for having obstructed the royal tax collectors, although it is not known whether the incident was at all related to the person of the duke. He was surely back in the royal favour in March 1498, when he was appointed by ban George Kanizsai as one of his vicebans. In September of the same year he was commissioned by the king in the company of two prothonotaries to settle the differences between two local magnates, his former lord, duke Lawrence Újlaki, and Nicholas Bánfi, master of the doorkeepers.<sup>1375</sup>

In the first decade of the sixteenth century George turns up constantly in a great number of documents, concerning various legal disputes, but these offer no help for the reconstruction of his career.<sup>1376</sup> Some hints, however, at least indicate that he remained close to the court: first of all, his marriage, to be treated below, with a *cubicularia* of queen Beatrix; then the fact that in 1506 cardinal Bakócz urged him to repay three hundred golden florins which he had previously sent by a Jew from Esztergom and were for some reason handed over to the men of George Kasztellánfi.<sup>1377</sup> In 1505 he was certainly in the service of the archbishop,<sup>1378</sup> and late in 1511 he was among the followers

1371 Only one example among many: MNL OL, DL 104 858. George also called himself of Bikszád sometimes: *Somogy Megye Múltjából* 14 (1983), no. 164 (MNL OL, DF, 268 184). See also Maček–Jurković, *Rodoslov plemića*, 132.

1372 MNL OL, DL 20 035, DL 108 322. It is certain that this George was not viceban in 1492 (Maček–Jurković, *Rodoslov plemića*, 131). At that time the ban was Ladislav Egervári, his deputy Oswald Polányi, joined early in 1493 by Michael Kerhen of Belosovc. Nor was he viceban in 1496 (*ibid.*, 132); the section in Vjekoslav Klaić, *Povijest Hrvata* [The History of Croatia], vol. 4 (Zagreb: MH, 1974), 251, referred to there concerns in fact the year 1512.

1373 MNL OL, DF 231 895, DF 231 899.

1374 MNL OL, DL 46 337: Duke Corvin's letter to "egregio Georgio Byxady fideli nostro nobis sincere dilecto," ordering him to help to recover the lands of another ducal familiaris, Marcinko of Predriho. In the summer of the same year 1496 he represented, together with Peter Derencsényi, the duke before the chapter of Buda: MNL OL, DL 37 708.

1375 *Somogy Megye Múltjából* 14 (1983), no. 148.

1376 Among others: MNL OL, DL 107 136, DL 107 141.

1377 MNL OL, DL 108 332: "quos videlicet florenos auri famuli vestri per vos Budam missi acceperunt ad visionem plurimorum hominum."

1378 MNL OL, DL 104 149: "domino Georgio Castalanfy de Bykzaad homini nostro."

of the cardinal when he left for Rome.<sup>1379</sup> He returned from the Eternal City sometime during 1512, and soon took part in a delicate mission, when, in September 1512, he negotiated, together with Balthasar Batthyány, with the widow of the late ban Andrew Both, who refused to open the banal castles until the salary of her husband was paid.<sup>1380</sup> Consequently he was commissioned by the Slavonian nobility to take part in the collection of the royal tax, and it was in the course of this work that he died at Buda in February 1513 and was buried there.<sup>1381</sup>

George contracted a highly (and somewhat unexpectedly) illustrious marriage by taking Helen, the daughter of count Charles of Corbavia as his wife.<sup>1382</sup> The grandfather of the bride was Nicholas Újlaki, king of Bosnia. With her hand George Kasztellánfi inherited the town of Mezőkövesd in the distant county of Borsod,<sup>1383</sup> which had been given to Helen by queen Beatrix.<sup>1384</sup> Although his social capital was certainly enhanced by this marriage, after the death of his first wife George chose a consort from the lower ranks of the nobility by marrying Euphrosyne Ostfi, the widow of George Ósi.<sup>1385</sup> From a letter written by George Kasztellánfi himself we know

1379 See his own letter from Ancona (Anchonia), January 5, 1512: MNL OL, DL 108 330. The date of the letter can indeed be read as 1502, and it was registered as such in the Hungarian National Archives. Yet his reference to his *dominus reverendissimus*, and the political events in Italy he reports on (the pope and the king of Spain allied and fighting against the French and Bologna) evidently place the letter to 1512. In any case, George Kasztellánfi is at Körös on 20 January 1502 (*Somogy Megye Múltjából* 14 (1983), no. 154), which obviously excludes his presence at Ancona a fortnight before. Moreover, in another letter written in September 1512 to his wife, he mentioned a letter of remittance (*litteras absolucionales*) taken from Rome (*ex Urbe*). Ibid., 14 (1983), no. 164.

1380 MNL OL, DL 22 345 (1512): “feria quinta proxime preterita (23 Sept) [...] redierunt domini Balthasar de Bathyan ac Georgius Castellanffy a domina banissa.”

1381 On all this see Pálosfalvi, “Bajnai Both András,” 290–95.

1382 Maček–Jurković, *Rodoslov plemića*, 134–36.

1383 MNL OL, DL 67 488.

1384 MNL OL, DL 86 433. George himself had the charter transcribed at Buda in 1507.

1385 Maček–Jurković, *Rodoslov plemića*, 136–38, identify the second wife of George Kasztellánfi as Euphrosyne (Eufrozina) Ostfi of Asszonyfalva on the basis of a later genealogy, and rightly, as it seems. It would nevertheless be useful to summarise here briefly what can be known about the family of Euphrosyne’s first husband. In 1473 a certain Ladislás Ósi took into pledge lands in the county of Körös (MNL OL, DL 100 832). In the same year he is mentioned together with his sons, Francis, Nicholas, George and Ladislás (DL 103 742). This Ladislás Ósi is surely identical with the Ladislás of Ewsy who was the provisor of John, bishop of Pécs, at Mohács in 1463 (DL 15 874), and who in 1481 was proscribed as a *familiaris* of the late bishop of Pécs (Tringli, “Szlavóniai közgyűlés,” 316: “Ladislau Ewsy de Buthkafewlde [...] famulum episcopi Quinqueecclesiensis”). This connection, moreover, accounts for his acquisition of land in Slavonia. It is surely his sons, George and Ladislás, who turn up as *egregii* in Körös in 1500 (MNL OL, DL 102 290), and who appear as Újvásári (de Wyvasar) two years before. George Ósi was lay administrator of the bishopric of Eger from 1493 to 1497, and then of the archbishopric of Esztergom until 1506, that is, a *familiaris* of Thomas Bakóc (DF 229 064, DF 229 124, DF 250 043, DF 250 048). That this George is identical with the one possessing in Slavonia is made evident by a protest made before the

that he cherished marriage plans for his daughters as ambitious as his own first. One of them was betrothed with a certain Ladislás Bátor(i) (*Bathor*), who, however, could not be a member of the baronial Bátori (ecsedí) family, which at that time did not have a member bearing this name.<sup>1386</sup> The other bride, called Blaise, then captain of the troops of the archbishop of Esztergom, who had a nice heritage “amounting to five hundred tenant plots,” cannot be other than Blaise Sági from the county of Nógrád; this marriage, however, apparently never took place.<sup>1387</sup>

George Kasztellánfi had seven sons from his two marriages, one of whom died in infancy, and only two seem to have survived Mohács.<sup>1388</sup> The main

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chapter of Csázma in 1499 by “honorabilis magister Gregorius canonicus de monte sancti Thome Strigoniensis nominibus et in personis egregiorum Georgii administratoris Strigoniensis et Ladislai fratris eiusdem Georgii de Ews” (DF 282 463). Now, we know that George Ósi married Euphrosyne Ostfi de Asszonyfalva (DL 86 425), who can thus be identified as the second wife of George Kasztellánfi. Yet, interestingly, two letters seem to prove that she in fact belonged to the Buzlai family. In 1514 Moses Buzlai, master of the court, calls Euphrosyne, widow of George Kasztellánfi, his sister (“domine sororis nostre relicte quondam Georgii Castelanfy,” DF 288 097). In 1519 it is Euphrosyne herself who calls Catherine Buzlai, wife of George Bátori, her sister (“domine Katherine consorti magnifici domini Georgii Bathori domine et sorori nostre,” DF 288 101). I was unable to find any affinity between the Ostfi and Buzlai families, but there must have been some. In any case, this supposed connection with the Bátori via the Buzlai would also help to explain the marriage of Ladislás Bátori with the stepdaughter of George, mentioned in the next note.

1386 *Somogy Megye Múltjából* 14 (1983), no. 164. On the Bátori of Ecsed family see Norbert C. Tóth, “Ki kicsoda az ecsedi Bátori családban? A Bátori család ecsedi ágának tagjai 1377–1541” [Who is who in the Bátori of Ecsed Family? The Members of the Bátori Family from the Ecsedi Branch 1377–1541], *Szabolcs-Szatmár-Beregi Szemle* 44, no. 1 (2009): 5–32. The Bátori of Somlyó family did have at that time a member called Ladislás, who can indeed have been the bride in question (Engel, *Középkori magyar genealógia*, Gútkeled nem 1. Rakamazi ág 5. tábla: Bátori (somlyói, folyt.), but the two Bátori families had been separated early in the fourteenth century, and those of Somlyó did not as yet share the dominant political influence of their distant kinsmen. Ladislás Bátori is titled merely egregius as late as 1539: Laszovski, *Monumenta Habsburgica*, vol. II, 436.

1387 The wife of Blaise Sági in 1517 was the widow of Andrew Orros of Semjén. Blaise previously had betrothed the widow of Valentine Erdődi, brother of archbishop Bakócz. There were two close relatives of the prelate bearing the same name: one of them, his cousin, married Catherine Várdai, whereas the other, his nephew, had Margaret Henning as his wife. Zsuzsa Hermann, “Miképp került Divény vára a Balassák kezére?” [How did the Castle of Divény Get into the Hands of the Balassa Family?], *Levéltári Közlemények*, 63 (1992): 1–2, 61, n. 4. Engel, *Középkori magyar genealógia*, Erdődy (Bakócz).

1388 These seven sons are not the same as those enumerated by Maček–Jurković, *Rodoslov plemića*, 161–73, however, who, moreover, list as many as eight sons. I left out of consideration Stephen and John the Younger, who are only known from later genealogical reconstructions, and there is no trace of them in contemporary sources. (I see no reason to suppose a younger John on the basis of MNL OL, DF 283 653, where only one John is mentioned.) There is, on the other hand, another boy called Caspar, a logical sequence to the two boys called Melchior and Balthasar (DL 22 746); the three Biblical kings appear with increasing frequency among the names given to noble sons from the last third of the

difficulty facing them after the death of their father apparently sprang from two sources: the dispute between the sons from the two consecutive marriages, and the extinction of the other branch of the family. We have seen that George had to protest even before the death of his heirless kinsman, Nicholas Szentléleki, against the alienation of his lands. It was all in vain, however, for in 1516 the king donated the whole heritage of Nicholas, regarded as having escheated to the crown, to the all-powerful castellan of Buda, John Bornemissza.<sup>1389</sup> John Kasztellánfi protested immediately, and so did all the heirs on the female line, among them some of the most influential local families. The latter, moreover, sued for these same lands before the judge royal, and won their case. Thus, whereas John Bornemissza seems never to have held a single parcel of the Kasztellánfi lands, members of the Pekri, Bocskai, Čavlović and Batthyány families did acquire parts of at least Szentlélek in the 1520s.<sup>1390</sup>

We know considerably less about the disputes among the sons of George Kasztellánfi. The core of the problem seems to have been that John, the only surviving son of Helen of Corbavia, wanted to retain the entire heritage of his father for himself. Whatever the reason, the brothers finally came to an agreement in 1523: Euphrosyne and her only surviving son then, Melchior were allowed to retain the castle of Szircs with some of its appurtenances, whereas John received the castle of Zselnyak/Želnjak and the *castellum* of Bikszád, with the stipulation that the castellans would be required to make an oath of mutual fidelity. Szentlélek was left unmentioned, which shows that it had gone lost by this time.<sup>1391</sup>

John, this time together with his brothers, also had to defend himself against the aspirations of George Szatmári, bishop of Pécs, who wanted to put his hands upon the town of Mezőkövesd.<sup>1392</sup> There were some gains on the account as well. In 1521 John and his half-brother, Melchior received from the king the lands of Gregory Ősi, which had devolved upon the crown precisely because Gregory had previously attacked and robbed the castle of the Kasztellánfi brothers at Zselnyak, killing some of their *familiares*.<sup>1393</sup> Interestingly enough, three years before these same possessions had been donated by the ruler to margrave George of Brandenburg; Gregory then had

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fifteenth century, and so does the name Farkas/Wolfgang. See the genealogical tree in the Appendix.

1389 MNL OL, DF 288 099.

1390 See the chapters concerning the individual families and the references there.

1391 MNL OL, DF 232 650.

1392 MNL OL, DF 232 551; DL 106 083/551. ecw.

1393 MNL OL, DF 232 587. It is with reference to this charter that Maček-Jurković, *Rodoslov plemića*, 159–60 maintain that the lawsuit concerning the filial quarter between the Kasztellánfi and Ősi families was terminated in favour of the former. However, there is nothing of the sort in this document, nor, as a matter of fact, in the other sources referred to by the authors.

been found guilty of having captivated and robbed Euphrosyne, the widow of George Kasztellánfi, in the otherwise unknown *castellum* of Zaylaka.<sup>1394</sup> It seems as if Gregory had a special reason to be angry with the Kasztellánfi, and it manifested itself in acts of an exceptionally violent character. The case is all the more interesting since, as we have just seen, the second wife of George Kasztellánfi, mother of Melchior and stepmother of John, had previously been married to George Ósi, and the wife of John himself, called Barbara, also belonged to the Ósi family. This was surely not the Ósi (Betlen) family from the county of Doboka;<sup>1395</sup> indeed, it is very probable that John married from the family of his stepmother, perhaps the very daughter of George Ósi and Euphrosyne Ostfi, although it is impossible to prove. Nor it is known what the eventual link between George and Gregory Ósi was, and whether at all they belonged to the same family, what, however, is probable.<sup>1396</sup>

The longer part of the political career of John, son of George Kasztellánfi and Helen of Corbavia, unfolded in the eventful years following Mohács. In 1520 he is attested as a court *familiaris*,<sup>1397</sup> and later he joined the light cavalry attached directly to the royal court.<sup>1398</sup> It was as such that he was active in the marches of Croatia in 1524,<sup>1399</sup> and took part in the expedition organised for the provision of Jajce a year later.<sup>1400</sup> He frequently turns up as royal *aulicus* before Mohács.<sup>1401</sup> In 1525 he is also mentioned among the *familiares* of ban John Tahi.<sup>1402</sup> His half-brother, Melchior, the only one among the sons of George from his second wife to survive Mohács, seems to have remained in the shadow of John both before and after 1526. The family later entered the Hungarian aristocracy by obtaining the baronial title in 1569.<sup>1403</sup>

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1394 MNL OL, DL 23 095.

1395 As Maček-Jurković, *Rodoslov plemića*, 159, maintain. In fact, none of the sources cited there makes any allusion to the descent of Barbara.

1396 In 1521 it was from the possession called Lelesz in the county of Baranya that the relatives of Gregory Ósi contradicted the introduction of the Kasztellánfi brothers; namely, the three daughters of Emeric Ósi, all married to well-known noblemen, one of them John Gétyei, deputy-palatine (MNL OL, DF 232 587). This Emeric is probably the one who followed Ladislas Ósi as provisor of Mohács in 1466 (DL 16 299), and in 1475 he was one of the alispáns of Baranya (DF 260 119). What is beyond doubt is that in the second decade of the sixteenth century this Ósi family was prestigious enough to provide a consort for John Kasztellánfi.

1397 MNL OL, DF 232 540.

1398 Fraknói, "Számadáskönyvek," 162.

1399 MNL OL, DF 232 667: "aulici nostri levis armature."

1400 MNL OL, DF 232 717.

1401 MNL OL, DF 232 716, DF 232 717, DF 232 725, DL 107 946/56 ecw.

1402 MNL OL, DF 277 175/441 ecw.

1403 Pálffy, "Pozsony megyéből a magyar királyság élére," 859.

## 2.2.24. Kecér of Radvány (Kecér od Radovana, Kecher de Radwan)

The Kecér family originated from the Aba kindred.<sup>1404</sup> Like the descendants of other great kindreds, they possessed lands in three distant corners of the kingdom, namely in the counties of Sáros, Zaránd and Baranya. It seems that all branches of the kindred, whose exact relationship to each other cannot be reconstructed with certainty, had shares in all three major blocks of land.<sup>1405</sup> Nicholas, son of Alexander (Sandrin) was alispán of the county of Baranya in the last decade of the fourteenth century.<sup>1406</sup> It was apparently from this Nicholas that Francis, the first member of the family to become rooted in Slavonia, descended.<sup>1407</sup> Prior to the very end of the fifteenth century the Kecér family apparently had no social relationships extending south of the Drava outside Baranya. As late as 1471 Ladislás and Francis Kecér were designated royal men in the county of Sáros, which seems to attest that they then still resided in that distant corner of the kingdom.<sup>1408</sup> It was apparently this Ladislás who in 1454 was called of his possession of Peklen (today Kecerovce, SL) in Sáros.<sup>1409</sup> We do not know how they finally made their way to Slavonia, although the fact that their southern estates lay in the proximity of the province certainly offers some explanation. Yet it seems that more precisely it was thanks to his services done to bishop Oswald of Zagreb that Francis Kecér arrived to Slavonia. In 1495 he represented, together with George Kerecsényi, the bishop of Zagreb at the banal seat as a special *familiaris*,<sup>1410</sup> and in 1499 the bishop designated him as one of the executors of his last will, which certainly presupposes a long period of cooperation between them. Indeed, after the death of bishop Oswald it was Francis Kecér who, again together with George Kerecsényi, occupied the lands of the late prelate.<sup>1411</sup> It is to be added that the cousin of Francis, Anthony son of Frank, made a parallel career in the court; at least in the same year of 1495 he is attested as a royal courtier (*aulicus*), when he receives a royal grant together

1404 Engel, *Középkori magyar genealógia*, Aba nem 8. Lipóci-ág 2. tábla Kecér.

1405 On the ancient lands of the kindred, with regard to the Lipóci branch see Karácsonyi, *Magyar nemzetségek*, 72–76. The Kecér who came to Slavonia in the late fifteenth century still seem to have had portions in all the three groups of property: MNL OL, DF 231 976 (Zaránd); DL 93 831 (Zaránd, Baranya); DL 39 868, DL 57 922 (Sáros); Borsa, *Balassa család levéltára*, no. 555. (Zaránd).

1406 Engel, *Archontológia*, vol. I, 103.

1407 That Alexander was the son of Nicholas is merely presumed by Engel. Alexander had two sons, Frank and Ladislás, who fathered Anthony and Emeric respectively (MNL OL, DL 20 610). Since this Emeric is said twice the carnalis brother of Francis (DF 231 976, DF 232 436), it is evident that the latter was also the son of Ladislás.

1408 MNL OL, DL 69 044.

1409 MNL OL, DL 90 009. On this occasion his wife is named, Elisabeth, the daughter of George Fuló of Kécs, who may consequently have been the mother of at least Emeric.

1410 MNL OL, DF 252 207, here as Franciscus de Radowan.

1411 MNL OL, DF 277 019.



with the *provisor* of Buda castle.<sup>1412</sup> It is, however, impossible to tell which of the two played a role in the advancement of the other, if that was the case at all.

Before 1502 Francis married Dorothy, the daughter of Nicholas Bocskai the elder and Barbara Pogány, the sister of Peter Pogány, and thus acquired portions in the estate of Raszinya.<sup>1413</sup> In 1507 he was engaged in some kind of royal service, for his portion in the estate of Raszinya was then exempted with reference to it.<sup>1414</sup> He then joined the retinue of Thomas Bakóc, archbishop of Esztergom,<sup>1415</sup> and became his *officialis* at his Slavonian estate of Monoszló.<sup>1416</sup> Between 1511 and 1516, when archbishop Bakóc governed the bishopric of Zagreb, Francis Kecser was his administrator there.<sup>1417</sup> As such not only did he govern the episcopal estates but also led the bishop's troops,<sup>1418</sup> and took part in the defence of the southern marches in general.<sup>1419</sup> In the spring of 1514 he was present in the royal court, and it was presumably upon this occasion that he received, together with his four sons, a coat of arms and the right of high justice from king Wladislaw II.<sup>1420</sup> As co-possessor at Raszinyakeresztúr he had a lot of conflicts with Louis Pekri, which could only be settled after the death of the latter in 1516.<sup>1421</sup> Alongside Raszinya, Francis acquired other possessions in the county of Körös, some of them apparently from his lord, archbishop Thomas.<sup>1422</sup> He put his hands on the Berekszői lands in Körös, although we do not know by what right.<sup>1423</sup> His acquisitions were not restricted to Slavonia, however: in 1504 he redeemed the portions of his kinsman, Frank, in the estate of Székudvar (Socodor, RO) for 350 florins,<sup>1424</sup> whereas in 1514 he took into pledge, together with Ambrose Kecser, the ancient family fortification at Lipóc ([Kecserovský] Lipovec, SL) for 2150 florins from palatine Emeric Perényi.<sup>1425</sup> He died before 1517, when already his widow is

1412 MNL OL, DL 64 490. In January of the same year he is sent to the ispán of Temes with an order of mobilisation: Engel, *Geschichte*, 65.

1413 On this marriage see above the chapter on the Bocskai family.

1414 MNL OL, DL 107 946/13 ecw: "pro serviciis suis in factis sue maiestatis."

1415 MNL OL, DL 25 437 (1504).

1416 MNL OL, DL 104 211.

1417 MNL OL, DF 277 034, DF 252 279, DF 276 907.

1418 Thallóczy-Horváth, *Jajca*, 233–34.

1419 In 1516 it was "medio Francisci Kecher" that the footmen of Jajce received 400 florins: Adamček–Kampuš, *Popisi*, 77.

1420 MNL OL, DF 277 034, DL 50 247.

1421 Eg. MNL OL, DF 276 873, DF 276 907.

1422 Poljana (Adamček–Kampuš, *Popisi*, 23), and certainly Ivanc (ibid., 34), which belonged to the bishopric of Zagreb.

1423 MNL OL, DL 60 025; Adamček–Kampuš, *Popisi*, 59, 127, where "relicta Francisci Facher" is to be read as Kecher, of course. In 1525 these lands are said to concern them half *jure hereditario*, half *titulo pignoris*: MNL OL, DF 276 919.

1424 MNL OL, DL 38 734.

1425 MNL OL, DL 105 766.

attested.<sup>1426</sup> He had at least four sons from her, Caspar, John, Stephen and George;<sup>1427</sup> the latter three disappear from our sources by 1523, however, when only Caspar is mentioned together with his mother.<sup>1428</sup> He certainly survived Mohács.<sup>1429</sup>

Francis seems to have left his widow and heirs in excellent financial conditions, for Dorothy was able to lend two thousand florins to John Bánfi in 1521 for the redemption of his castles of Fejérkő and Újvár,<sup>1430</sup> whereas four years later she took the estate of Lobor into pledge from Peter Keglević for 1500 florins.<sup>1431</sup> We do not know what the exact relationship was between Francis and Ambrose Kecser, with whom he acquired the castle of Lipóc in 1514;<sup>1432</sup> most probably Ambrose was the son of Anthony. In the late 1510s he seems to have been active in the county of Sáros,<sup>1433</sup> but by 1520 he had already obtained at least some of the Kecser lands in Slavonia.<sup>1434</sup> Moreover, at that time these lands of his were exempted from the local tax, which means that he was in some kind of royal service.<sup>1435</sup> Indeed, three years later the royal treasurer, Paul Várdai expressly referred to these services,<sup>1436</sup> and shortly before the battle of Mohács Ambrose turns up as a court *familiaris* and an envoy sent by king Louis II to the ban of Slavonia.<sup>1437</sup> After the battle, in September 1526, he was one of the envoys whom the Slavonian nobility dispatched to Ferdinand, archduke of Austria.<sup>1438</sup> Ambrose, whose lands in the counties of Sáros and Abaúj were granted away by king Ferdinand for infidelity in 1538,<sup>1439</sup> also had four sons, Francis, Stephen, John and Andrew. In 1552 they were confirmed by the same ruler in their ancient estates in the same counties, which proves that the donation of 1538 remained a dead letter.<sup>1440</sup> The family also retained its Slavonian lands, right into the eighteenth century, when the ancient Berekszői estates were still in the hands of Stephen Kecser.<sup>1441</sup>

1426 Adamček–Kampuš, *Popisi*, 94.

1427 MNL OL, DF 288 099.

1428 MNL OL, DF 276 899.

1429 Laszowski, *Monumenta Habsburgica*, vol. I, 123, 226.

1430 MNL OL, DL 34 189.

1431 Stipišić–Šamšalović, *Ispriave*, no. 4662.

1432 Engel (*Középkori magyar genealógia*, Aba nem 8. Lipóci-ág 2. tábla Kecser) supposed that he was the brother of Francis. It is, however, more probable that he was the son of Anthony Kecser.

1433 MNL OL, DL 39 868, DL 39 869, DL 57 922, always called of Peklen.

1434 Adamček–Kampuš, *Popisi*, 127, 130.

1435 MNL OL, DL 104 367.

1436 MNL OL, DL 104 422: “non solum regie maiestati verum eciam nobis semper paratus fuit servire et multa eciam servivit.”

1437 *Levéltári Közlemények* 4 (1927): 84.

1438 Šišić, *Acta comitalia*, vol. I, 9.

1439 MNL OL, *Libri regii*, vol. 1, 354.

1440 *Ibid.*, vol. 3, 10.

1441 *Ibid.*, vol. 26, 159. See also Adamček–Kampuš, *Popisi*, 257, and *passim*.

## 2.2.25. Kerecsényi (Kerečenji, de Kerechen)

The Kerecsényi family seems to have descended from the Gyovad kindred, a not very outstanding *genus* whose lands lay in south-eastern Transdanubia.<sup>1442</sup> Very little is known about the original wealth of Kemény, the ancestor of the family. It was Peter, son of Kemény who acquired the possession of Bagolya, in the county of Zala, part of which was pledged by his descendants in 1468 together with the predium called *Othy*.<sup>1443</sup> The family was exceptionally prolific, to judge by the number of persons called Kerecsényi who turn up in our sources in the course of the fifteenth century.<sup>1444</sup> Yet almost nothing is known about their activities until well beyond the middle of the century. The sons of Paul Kerecsényi, Lawrence and Michael, occur as designated royal men in 1422,<sup>1445</sup> and it is surely this Lawrence from whom the Slavonian branch of the family descended. Another Michael, son of Nicholas, a literate person, is referred to at the same time as a royal man specially sent from the royal court.<sup>1446</sup>

However, it was another member of the family, Ladislás son of Thomas, whose relationship to Lawrence cannot be established, who first emerged from the obscurity which generally prevents the historian from having a deeper look into the life of the petty nobility. In 1464 he was castellan of Alsólendva in the service of the Bánfi family,<sup>1447</sup> and it seems to have been this Ladislás who acquired the possession of Kányafölde of which the family was called later. It is, unfortunately, impossible to tell what role this Ladislás played in the social ascent of George, grandson of Lawrence, who laid the

1442 MNL OL, DL 49 462: "Petrus filius quondam Laurencii de Kerezen necnon Georgius et Michael filii eiusdem Petri [...] de genere seu progenia (!) similiter quondam alterius Petri filii Kemyn de Guad procreati." Karácsonyi (*Magyar nemzetségek*, 545) mentions the possible belonging of the Kerecsényi to the kindred with reference to Imre Nagy, but does not treat them as such. Nor are they attached to the Gyovad kindred by Engel (*Középkori magyar genealógia*, Gyovad nem 2).

1443 See the charter cited in the previous note. On the acquisition see Karácsonyi, *Magyar nemzetségek*, 544.

1444 The villages of Alsó and Felső Kerecsény were mostly inhabited by one-plot nobles in the early sixteenth century: Csánki, *Történelmi földrajz*, vol. III, 69. In 1488 mentioned as neighbours there are Elias de Kerechen, Johannes Kwthy dictus, Gregorius Zabad ac Michael de eadem Kerechen, Johannes Byk dictus, Thomas Parvus, Benedictus filius Valentini, Thomas Zekel, alter Thomas Kerecheny, Franciscus Parvus, Johannes Magnus, nobilis domina Agatha, consors Pauli Varga de sepefata Kerechen: MNL OL, DL 19 368.

1445 *Zsigmondkori Oklevéltár*, vol. IX, no. 259.

1446 *Ibid.*, vol. X, no. 1295. The two Michaels cannot be identical, for the latter Michael, literatus, is said in 1424 to be the son of Nicholas: *ibid.*, vol. XI, no. 306.

1447 MNL OL, DL 16 004. In 1439 this Thomas was royal man together with Michael Kerecsényi, perhaps the one mentioned in 1422. Imre Nagy, Dezső Véghely and Gyula Nagy, *Zala vármegye története. Oklevéltár* [The History of Zala County. Documents], vol. II of 2 (Budapest, 1886–1890), 498–99.

foundations for the family's rise before and after Mohács. Since the Bánfi also had possessions in Slavonia, the territorial shift was only natural, anyway.

When he appears for the first time during the civil war which followed the death of king Matthias, he was serving another local magnate, Nicholas Szécsi of Felsőlendva (Grad, SLO).<sup>1448</sup> He shifted his allegiance soon thereafter, however, and joined bishop Oswald of Zagreb,<sup>1449</sup> who appointed him as *vicarius temporalis* of his bishopric.<sup>1450</sup> At the time of the bishop's death in 1499 George was governing his castle of Gornec.<sup>1451</sup> As in the case of Peter Gudovci before, and Stephen Prasovci later, this post, or rather the revenues accruing from it, allowed George to accumulate landed wealth on a scale which would otherwise have been impossible for a person of his standing. In his native county of Zala he took into pledge portions of the villages owned by the Rajki family,<sup>1452</sup> whereas in that of Vas he did the same with some lands belonging to the Pető of Gerse family.<sup>1453</sup> He also took into pledge the village of Szentkozmadamján from Sigismund Bezerédi, likewise in Zala.<sup>1454</sup> Sometime before 1500 he had the financial means to lend 500 golden florins to Peter Butkai and John Podmanicki, governors of the bishopric of Zagreb.<sup>1455</sup> It was in all probability George who erected a *castellum* on his possession of Kányafölde.<sup>1456</sup>

He also laid the foundations for expansion in Slavonia. He betrothed his son, Paul, with the daughter of Peter Mikcsec of Cirkvena, and thus acquired the whole inheritance of the latter, together with the *castellum* at Cirkvena itself.<sup>1457</sup> It may not have been entirely accidental that he chose the estate of Cirkvena for acquisition: for he had married Susan Kacor, and thus become the brother-in-law of Stephen Gudovci, whose possessions lay in the neighbourhood.<sup>1458</sup> Although he was consequently sued by the kinsmen of the late Peter Mikcsec, and had to buy out some of them,<sup>1459</sup> in 1504 at the latest his castellan was residing in Cirkvena.<sup>1460</sup> He did not leave his native

1448 Ibid., vol. II, 633.

1449 Already in August 1491 he represented John Tuz of Lak and his sons before the chapter of Csázma in the case of the castle of Medve and its appurtenances: MNL OL, DL 37 651.

1450 In 1494 a violent trespass that George committed with the familiars of bishop Oswald four years before is mentioned, yet it is uncertain whether his title as *vicarius temporalis episcopatus Zagradiensis* refers to the time when the act itself was committed or to the time when the charter was issued: MNL OL, DL 107 097.

1451 MNL OL, DF 232 015.

1452 MNL OL, DL 102 686, DL 67 649.

1453 MNL OL, DL 94 297, DL 67 870.

1454 MNL OL, DL 71 732.

1455 MNL OL, DL 67 156.

1456 Koppány, *Középkori kastélyok*, 162; MNL OL, DF 277 175/ 25–26 ecw.

1457 See the chapter on the Cirkvenai with the charters cited there.

1458 MNL OL, DL 47 328.

1459 MNL OL, DF 282 471.

1460 MNL OL, DF 232 179.

land for all, however, for in 1505 he was one of the envoys sent by the county of Zala to the diet of Rákóc.<sup>1461</sup> A year before he is attested as castellan of Monyorókerék in the county of Vas, that is, in the meantime he had entered the service of archbishop Thomas Bakóc.<sup>1462</sup> By 1507 at the latest he had been elected among the noble jurors (*assessores*) of the royal council, an evident sign of his growing wealth and prestige.<sup>1463</sup> He did not apparently leave the service of Bakóc, however, for sometime before 1510 the prelate entrusted to him the administration of the archbishopric of Esztergom, the richest see in late medieval Hungary.<sup>1464</sup>

George, who died sometime before 1516,<sup>1465</sup> had two sons, Paul and George, but we know next to nothing about the latter.<sup>1466</sup> Paul, on the other hand, who had married Dorothy Mikcsec, emerges already in 1516 as the leader of the noble élite in the county of Zala in a violent trespass committed against the Bánfi of Alsólendva;<sup>1467</sup> it is certainly indicative that the jury which settled the matter somewhat later comprised, alongside four of the richest local noblemen, bishop Briccius of Knin and the magnate Thomas Szécsi.<sup>1468</sup> Then he disappears for some time, to return in 1521 already as the captain of Slavonia nominated by the king.<sup>1469</sup> As there had been no ban appointed since the death of Peter Beriszló in May 1520, Paul certainly assumed the ban's military functions upon royal order, at least for the time of the great mobilisation occasioned by the Ottoman siege and capture of Belgrade.

Some months later he already functioned as the deputy of the new ban of Slavonia, John of Corbavia, and remained in this office until the removal of his lord from the banship. Indeed, he seems to have gradually become the chief supporter of count John in Slavonia. In 1523 he acted, together with John Raveni, as the ban's commissioner in the affair of the acquisition by the latter of the castles of margrave George of Brandenburg, and remained faithful to his lord after 1524 as well, which, in 1525 at least, turned him against the supporters of the new ban, John Tahi.<sup>1470</sup> His authority in Slavonia was great, proof of which is that in the early 1520s we see him as arbitrator on at least

1461 MNL OL, DL 39 335. In 1502 he dated a letter from Kányafölde: DL 67 648.

1462 MNL OL, DF 232 166.

1463 In that year he receives two hundred florins as a salary ("ad rationem sallarii sui ratione huiusmodi assessoratus") from the Slavonian tax: MNL OL, DL 107 946/011 ecw. Kubinyi, "Közneemesi ülnökök," 263. In 1508 his Slavonian lands were exempted, and he received 300 florins, perhaps for the same reason. Adamček–Kampuš, *Popisi*, 45.

1464 MNL OL, DL 67 657 (1510): "administrator proventuum archiepiscopatus Strigoniensis."

1465 MNL OL, DL 94 325.

1466 He is mentioned in 1523: MNL OL, DF 232 617.

1467 MNL OL, DL 64 802.

1468 MNL OL, DL 94 325.

1469 Lajos Thallóczy and Antal Hodinka eds., *Magyarország melléktartományainak oklevéltára I. A horvát vég helyek oklevéltára* [Documents Illustrating the History of Croatian Border Castles], vol. I, 1490–1527 (Budapest: MTA, 1903), 31; MNL OL, DL 25 624.

1470 MNL OL, DF 277 175/441ecw.

three occasions.<sup>1471</sup> It is possible that he wanted to move definitively to Slavonia, for in 1522 he considered the alienation of his castle of Kányafölde to Denis Hássági,<sup>1472</sup> and later, already after 1526, he acquired that of Zelina (Zelingrad, CRO) in the county of Zagreb.<sup>1473</sup> He survived Mohács, as did his two sons, Michael and Ladislás, who were certainly born before 1526; the former later also functioned as viceban and then as deputy palatine,<sup>1474</sup> whereas the latter became captain of Gyula and of the inferior parts of the kingdom, and ascended to the ranks of the aristocracy.<sup>1475</sup>

#### 2.2.26. Kopinci (de Kopynch, Kwpyncz, Kopynczky)

Kopinc (*Kwpincz*) may originally have belonged to the estate of Dobrakucsá, although it is impossible to know how and when it was detached from it.<sup>1476</sup> It is even possible that part of it remained independent and was possessed by noblemen who bore its name. Unfortunately, the only name known to us from the fourteenth century is that of Nicholas, son of Nicholas of Kopynch, who was designated royal man in 1367.<sup>1477</sup> He is almost certainly identical with the Nicholas son of Nicholas who four years before acquired Kopinc (*Kopynch*) from his wife, sister of Peter Bresztolci (Brestovac Požeški, CRO).<sup>1478</sup> Then it is almost a century later that we meet George Kopinci, son of Blaise, among the neighbours of Peker,<sup>1479</sup> and Benedict Kopinci, who is attested as a lawyer in 1449.<sup>1480</sup> A year later it is Anthony Kopinci who is referred to as a royal

1471 MNL OL, DF 255 609, DF 232 669, DL 106 793.

1472 MNL OL, DF 277 175/ 049–051 ecw.

1473 Antun Mayer et al. eds., "Regesti isprava 16 stoljeća iz Arhiva Hrvatske Akademije Znanosti i Umjetnosti 1538– 1545" [Abstracts of the Charters from the Sixteenth Century in the Archives of the Croatian Academy of Sciences], *Zbornik odsjeka za povijesne znanosti* 27 (2009): 342. Adamček–Kampuš, *Popisi*, 143; Laszowski, *Monumenta Habsburgica*, vol. II, 248–49.

1474 Pálffy, "Budróci Budor család," 943.

1475 MNL OL, *Libri regii*, vol. 3, 576 (baronial title); 789 (captain of Gyula etc.). See also Pálffy: "Kerületi és végvidéki főkapitányok," 275. He married the daughter of Gregory Orlovčić, from whom his son Christopher was born (MNL OL, *Libri regii*, vol. 1, 266–69, vol. 3, 194–95). Another son of Paul, Matthias Kerecsényi, married the daughter of Andrew Henning of Szomszédvár, from the county of Zagreb (*ibid.*, vol. 3, 977.) On the post-1526 career of the family see also Ignác Kosutány, "A Kányaföldi Kerecsényiek a XVI. században" [The Kerecsényi of Kányafölde in the Sixteenth Century], *Századok* 16 (1882): 457–78.

1476 Kupinc or Kupinchege (Kwpinczhege), of which the Kopinci family seems to have been called, is still listed among the appurtenances of Dobrakucsá in 1477 (MNL OL, DL 102 200). In 1468 Anthony Kopinci owns some vineyards "in tenutis possessionis Dobrakuchya videlicet in Koppinczhege" (DF 255 801).

1477 Smičiklas, *Codex diplomaticus*, vol. XIV, 14.

1478 MNL OL, DL 5240.

1479 MNL OL, DL 106 969.

1480 MNL OL, DL 103 615.



man,<sup>1481</sup> and in 1453 he was already serving John and Paul Nelepec.<sup>1482</sup> He was the son of Benedict,<sup>1483</sup> but we do not know what kind of relationship existed between them and their kinsman, Elias Kopinci, who was castellan of Orbász in 1429, and that of Szombathely in 1442, in both cases in the service of the Sencsei family.<sup>1484</sup> In any case, in 1460 it was the portion of Elias at Kopinc that Anthony took into pledge together with his three sons.<sup>1485</sup> By that time the possession of Kretin had also been pledged to him by Emeric Szász of Tamasovc.<sup>1486</sup> In that period he was one of the leading *familiares* of ban Vitovec, among whom he was pardoned by the king in 1463.<sup>1487</sup> He married the sister of Peter Szehánharasztjai, called Anne, with whose hands he acquired the possessions of Szehánharasztja (*Zeyanahrazthya*)<sup>1488</sup> and Gradiska (*Gradyscha*).<sup>1489</sup> About the family of his wife we know nothing, except that his brother-in-law was twice Slavonian envoy at Buda in the 1440s. Anthony also obtained, or perhaps inherited, the possession of Gregorovc, of which he was named sometimes.<sup>1490</sup> If we add to all this that he also held other portions in pledge, such as the one on the appurtenances of Megyericse,<sup>1491</sup> some of the portions of George Fáncs on the appurtenances of Gordova before 1467,<sup>1492</sup> and seems also to have had some lands in the county of Verőce,<sup>1493</sup> it is evident that in the 1470s he possessed certainly more than 50 inhabited peasant plots, which at least partly accounts for his regularly being titled *egregius*.<sup>1494</sup> In September 1470 he was one of the two noblemen to ask ban Blaise Magyar to transcribe a charter in the name of the Slavonian nobility.<sup>1495</sup> He was listed at all three congregations of the Slavonian nobility held in the 1470s. In the same period he was elected at least three times as arbitrator in cases involving local noblemen, and in 1477 he was one of those who intervened in the name of Ladislás Hermanfi of Greben with bishop Oswald and arranged an agreement in the matter of tithe-paying.<sup>1496</sup> In the same year he emerges as a figure of even greater authority, when we see him as an arbitrator between Nicholas

1481 MNL OL, DF 231 261.

1482 MNL OL, DL 106 833.

1483 MNL OL, DF 233 417.

1484 Engel, *Archontológia*, vol. I, 381, 434.

1485 MNL OL, DL 15 448.

1486 MNL OL, DF 231 441.

1487 MNL OL, DF 233 405.

1488 The name is rendered as Szénaharasztja by Engel (*Archontológia*, vol. II, 225), but it seems in fact to have derived from a name like Zehanus.

1489 MNL OL, DF 231 613, DF 231 614.

1490 MNL OL, DF 276 827: "Anthonius de Kopyncz alias de Gregoryowcz."

1491 MNL OL, DF 231 565.

1492 MNL OL, DF 233 417.

1493 *Levéltári Közlemények* 7 (1929), 301–02.

1494 MNL OL, DF 231 565, DF 231 613, DL 33 488, DL 103 842, DL 100 980.

1495 MNL OL, DF 268 072.

1496 *Levéltári Közlemények* 13 (1935): 238; MNL OL, DL 101 766; DL 100 851 (in this latter case it was before him that the oath had to be taken); DF 252 063.

Újlaki, king of Bosnia, and the Bánfi brothers, alongside the king's attorney and the leading *familiares* of king Nicholas.<sup>1497</sup> In 1481 he was proscribed at the congregation of Zagreb for forging charters, where, however, he also acted as one of the elected noble jurors of Verőce.<sup>1498</sup> He died soon afterwards, and probably only one of his sons, called Ladislav, survived him.<sup>1499</sup>

The latter apparently inherited none of his father's "public" authority, although he inherited most of his lands. In 1481,<sup>1500</sup> and then in 1485, he was designated royal man,<sup>1501</sup> and on the first occasion he is called *litteratus*. Somewhat later he turns up as castellan of Szaplonca in the service of the Bánfi family, and as such titled *egregius*.<sup>1502</sup> It is possible that he died shortly thereafter, for he completely disappears from our sources. It should be noted that in 1495 the possessions which had previously been owned by Anthony Kopinci, and were to be owned by John Kopinci later, were listed in the hands of George Móri, whose wife was Catherine, the widow of Blaise Budor of Budrovc.<sup>1503</sup> This George seems to be identical with the person who led the prior of Vrana's troops in 1495, and who was castellan of Velike in 1522.<sup>1504</sup> With John Kopinci, who turns up in the early sixteenth century, and may have been the son of Ladislav, the tide seems to have turned. He reobtained most of the paternal lands, and was thus again occasionally accorded the *egregius* title,<sup>1505</sup> although he is but once attested as a royal man.<sup>1506</sup> In 1518 and 1521, however, he was already one of the castellans of Lawrence Újlaki at Kontovc,<sup>1507</sup> and in the 1520s we likewise find him in the service of the duke.<sup>1508</sup> At the same time he also turns up as arbitrator between Stephen Désházi, royal councillor, and Francis Battyányi.<sup>1509</sup> After Mohács he was elected as szolgabíró in the county of Körös.<sup>1510</sup>

1497 MNL OL, DL 33 432.

1498 Tringli, "Szlavóniai közgyűlés," 314.

1499 MNL OL, DL 100 980.

1500 MNL OL, DL 33 434.

1501 MNL OL, DL 19 054.

1502 MNL OL, DL 94 547.

1503 Adamček–Kampuš, *Popisi*, 7, 11, 13; Stipišić–Šamšalović, *Isprave*, no. 3575. (I was unable to find the original charter.)

1504 MNL OL, DL 104 017 (1494): "Georgio dicto More capitaneo gencium venerabilis et magnifici Bartholomei prioris Aurane;" DL 25 657 (castellan).

1505 MNL OL, DL 34 167, DF 277 175/75 ecw.

1506 MNL OL, DF 256 033.

1507 MNL OL, DL 23 000, DL 94 864.

1508 MNL OL, DF 277 175/149 ecw.

1509 MNL OL, DL 106 793.

1510 Šišić, *Acta comitialia*, vol. I, 267.

## 2.2.27. Kristallóci 1, 2 (od Kreštelovca, de Cristhalowch)

The first Kristallóci family died out early in the fifteenth century, yet I included them into the analysis because they offer an interesting parallel for the kin of Isaac/Hudina, as the descendants of a castle warrior (*várjobbágy*) who became integrated into the noble élite with a considerable amount of land. The family seems to have descended from the Cristol *comes*, who is mentioned in 1200 and 1202 among the leading members of the entourage of duke Andrew.<sup>1511</sup> The descendants of this Cristol were in the fourteenth century sometimes referred to as *de genere Cristol*,<sup>1512</sup> but these charters tell nothing about his origins. It is surely this Cristol who gave his name to the land originally called Toplica, later known as Kristallóc.<sup>1513</sup> Toplica, however, originally belonged to the county of Somogy, and was given by king Béla to a certain Drugan, son of Bayleta in exchange for his land of Verőce.<sup>1514</sup> It should also be added that the Nicholas, son of Stephen, who is likewise called Kristallóci in the fourteenth century, was in fact raised by king Louis I to the nobility from among the castle warriors in 1363.<sup>1515</sup> He descended on the female line from Drugan.<sup>1516</sup> Since his father, Stephen Arthow, was referred to as belonging to the kindred of Cristol,<sup>1517</sup> it is probable that the two families became connected via the marriage of this Stephen with a woman who had descended from Drugan. This would of course mean that Cristol *comes*, like Hudina, and presumably Isaac, was originally a castle warrior. The case is not absolutely clear, but it is very likely that the three branches of the family which divided among themselves the estate of Kristallóc in 1351 had descended in fact from different ancestors. What is certain is that this Cristol must have been an important figure in his age, for a century later his descendants maintained that the market held at Kristallóc/Toplica had originally been granted to him by the king, a fact which presupposes some closeness to the ruler.<sup>1518</sup> His position, thus, resembles again very much that of *comes* Hudina. The lands he had bequeathed to his descendants were extensive enough to arouse the greed of their neighbour, Paul Pekri, who tried around the middle of the fourteenth century to take them by force.<sup>1519</sup> This is all that we know about the family until the very beginning of the fifteenth century.

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1511 Smičiklas, *Codex diplomaticus*, vol. II, 353, vol. III, 17.

1512 MNL OL, DL 100 042.

1513 Eg. MNL OL, DL 100 065: "Thopolcha seu Crustholouch."

1514 "quandam terram castri Symigiensis nomine Toplicham in Garis."

1515 Smičiklas, *Codex diplomaticus*, vol. XIII, 272–73.

1516 Ibid., 320: "ipse per dominam matrem suam ex linea predicti condam Drugani naturaliter extitisset propagatus."

1517 MNL OL, DL 100 042.

1518 MNL OL, DL 100 133: "forum adhuc per Cristol protavum ipsorum a regia maiestate evidenter obtentum extitisset."

1519 MNL OL, DL 100 133.

In the critical period around 1400, however, Ladislás Kristallóci, the son of Nicholas, joined the camp of king Sigismund, perhaps because the family's ancient enemies, the Pekri, had attached themselves to the opposite side. Whatever the case, in 1403 Ladislás was rewarded for his services with the possessions of some neighbouring noblemen, and those of his own relatives (?) at Kristallóc itself. Other portions of Kristallóc were donated to Peter Kasztellánfi, and Ladislás promised to buy these back at his own expenses. He was thus in no lack of money, and even had the financial means to buy further portions in the estates of Csezmice and Csernareka. To judge by the later extension of Kristallóc, his acquisitions must have been considerable. It is therefore with good reason that we suppose that it was this Ladislás who erected the *castellum* at Kristallóc, which is first attested after his death. Ladislás was accordingly titled master,<sup>1520</sup> even though he was the only one among his kin to get the title. Ladislás had a son called Thomas, and four daughters, one of whom was married into the Grebeni family, another sign of regional esteem.

Thomas died without male heir, however,<sup>1521</sup> and his possessions, together with the *castellum* at Kristallóc, were donated by king Sigismund to Nicholas Szerecsen and Joseph (Josa) the Turk in 1428. Nicholas came from the village of Gerec, in the county of Körös, which is certainly not identical with the other Gerec treated above.<sup>1522</sup> His ancestors had originally arrived from the distant county of Szatmár, more exactly the village of Nábrád, sometime during the fourteenth century.<sup>1523</sup> Accordingly, members of the

1520 *Zsigmondkori Oklevéltár*, vol. IV, no. 987.

1521 *Ibid.*, vol. VI, 266. It is to be noted, however, that not all the kin descended from either Drugan or Cristol disappeared with the heirless death of Thomas. In 1422 there turns up a person called Nicholas, son of Ugrin, of Kristallóc, who certainly belonged to the first Kristallóci family, although we do not know exactly how; presumably he descended from one of the four sons of Valentine, son of Samson. His descendants, commonly referred to as Ugrinfi (Ugrini), turn up frequently as royal men in the course of the fifteenth century, and merely owned a couple of tenant plots on the appurtenances of Kristallóc. *Zsigmondkori Oklevéltár*, vol. IX, no. 1045; MNL OL, DF 255 785; DF 268 097; DL 103 795; DL 106 868; DL 107119; Adamček–Kampuš, *Popisi*, 11. Also belonging to the first Kristallóci family was Peter Kristallóci, literatus, whose portions in the market town of Kristallóc and in the villages belonging to it were donated in 1471 by king Matthias to Ladislás Hermanfi: MNL OL, DL 100 816.

1522 In 1501 it is listed among the parishes within the archdeaconry of Csázma. Even Csánki was confused by the existence of two possessions called Gerec in Körös, however, and supposed that this latter Gerec was in fact a misspelling for Gradec. Cf. Csánki, *Körösmegye*, 76. The other Gerec lay in the district of Gvestye/Gušće, subordinated to the provostry of Csázma. There was no family relationship between the two families (see Engel, *Archontológia*, vol. II, 83, who, however, supposes such a relationship). Elemér Mályusz also confuses the two families: *Zsigmond király*, 81.

1523 On the Nábrádi family see Péter Németh, *A középkori Szatmár megye települései a XV. század elejéig* [The Settlements of Szatmár County until the Beginning of the Fifteenth Century] (Nyíregyháza: Jósza András Múzeum, 2008), 192–94. Even Németh maintains, presumably influenced by Engel, that the two Gereci families were connected, and the Nábrádi came to

family were also called as of Nábrád or simply Nábrád in Slavonia, and they seem to have given their name to the village of Nabradovc in the county of Körös, where, alongside Gerec, they possessed Dragenovc and part of Kutenya.<sup>1524</sup> The sons of John Nábrádi turn up frequently in the last third of the fourteenth century, as royal men but also in an arbitration in which one of the parties concerned was the chapter of Csázma. The family would certainly have continued to live the uneventful life of the petty nobility, however, had Nicholas, the son of Philip, son of John, not become a member of the royal court. In his case the origins of the court career are exceptionally clear: he had been taken captive in the battle of Nicopolis, and could only return to Hungary after more than a decade in Ottoman captivity. It was thus evidently the experience gained there which signalled him out for the tasks later entrusted to him by king Sigismund. In the 1420s and 1430s he accomplished several missions to different powers of the East, which earned him the sobriquet *Saracenus* (Hung. Szerecsen).<sup>1525</sup> In the meantime he was also briefly ispán of Verőce, a knight of the court and, finally, judge of the Cumans. His brother, Denis, entered the church, and became *custos* in the chapter of Fehérvár.

From one of his journeys he returned home in the company of a Turk, who later accompanied him for his travels to the East. Known in Hungary as Joseph the Turk (*Josa Turcus*), he converted to Christianity, and also became a knight of the court, and later judge of the Cumans. Shortly before the death of Sigismund, ban Matko Tallóci confiscated in the name of the king all their joint properties in Slavonia, but this time they somehow managed to get them back.

Their children were not so lucky twenty years later, however. Both Nicholas Szerecsen and Joseph had a son, called John and Ladislás respectively. John for some reason adopted Simon Nagy of Szentmárton as his brother, and gave him the half of his own portion of the estate of Kristallóc. Consequently, the whole estate was confiscated and donated to John Vitovec in 1456, after Simon had been convicted of infidelity for evident political reasons, and together with him his “accomplices”, John Szerecsen and Ladislás Kristallóci. John seems to have died heirless soon thereafter,<sup>1526</sup> whereas Ladislás, who survived John Vitovec after having served him for some time in the early

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Körös thanks to Alexander, nephew of palatine Majos, from whom, as we have seen above, the other Gereci descended. *Ibid.*, 193.

1524 Smičiklas, *Codex diplomaticus*, vol. X, 290: Johannes de Nabrad; *ibid.*, vol. XIII, 300: Johannes filius Matheus dictus Naabrad, here also their possessions.

1525 On his career and missions to the east see Mályusz, *Zsigmond király*, 81–82.

1526 Nicholas Szerecsen had a cousin called John, son of Valentine Nábrádi. This John seems to have returned temporarily to Szatmár, after in 1416 he had reobtained part of the family lands there. In 1435, however, he was proscribed for having forged charters, whereupon he again went back to Slavonia. There he owned at Kristallóc together with Nicholas Szerecsen, and even turns up among the arbitrators in the case of Ludbreg in 1452. He is mentioned for the last time in 1454 as “Johannes litteratus de Nabrad alias de Cristaloucz,” and died soon thereafter without offspring.

1460s,<sup>1527</sup> managed to win back almost the entire estate of Kristallóc before the judge royal in 1469–70. Yet the money needed to pursue the case was provided by his neighbour, Ladislás Hermanfi, in return for which he gradually put his hands upon the whole estate.<sup>1528</sup>

Although Ladislás Józsafi (*Josafy*) managed to retain a tiny portion of Kristallóc, he and his offspring sank into complete obscurity after 1456. Ladislás himself lived into a fairly old age, but is only attested as designated royal man.<sup>1529</sup> On one single occasion, in 1493, he is accorded the *egregius* title, when he acts as one of the arbitrators of Balthasar Batthyány.<sup>1530</sup> Two sons of his are known, one of whom, called Thomas, seems to have died shortly after 1471, when he is mentioned for the last time.<sup>1531</sup> The other son, George, who definitively resigned his claims to Kristallóc in favour of Ladislás Hermanfi in 1489, entered the church and died as a priest.<sup>1532</sup> Yet Ladislás also had two daughters, one of them called Catherine, who married a certain Anthony Tarko, and another whose name is unknown, who became the wife of a certain George Horváth.<sup>1533</sup> The former turns up first in 1486 as a *predialis* in the service of Ladislás Egervári, who then sent him to Bosnia with Ottoman captives to be ransomed.<sup>1534</sup> Consequently, however, both he and George came to be called of Kristallóc, although they merely owned there the third part of the portion once restored to Ladislás Josafi. Moreover, Anthony Tarko was at least occasionally titled *egregius*, apparently not because of his marriage with the daughter of Ladislás Josafi, but because in the early 1490s he emerged as one of the leading *familiares* of Balthasar Batthyány, then ban of Jajce and, as we have seen above, titled *magnificus* as such.<sup>1535</sup> In 1513 he was Balthasar's castellan at Greben.<sup>1536</sup> From Catherine Józsafi Anthony Tarko had at least two sons, Stephen and Bartholomew, none of whom can be followed into the sixteenth century.<sup>1537</sup>

1527 MNL OL, DL 103 812.

1528 On the whole affair of Kristallóc see Pálosfalvi, "Grebeni Hermanfi," I, 851–53.

1529 MNL OL, DF 255 772.

1530 MNL OL, DL 106 865.

1531 MNL OL, DL 100 807.

1532 MNL OL, DL 102 298.

1533 MNL OL, DL 101 336.

1534 MNL OL, DL 19 210, cf. Klaić, *Plemići*, 35–36: "quendam Anthonium Thurk famulum seu predialem suum." That this Anthony Turk is identical with the later Anthony Tarko is only a hypothesis, but a very probable one.

1535 MNL OL, DL 104 047, DL 46 450 (here once as of Palychna), DL 104 011, DF 231 937.

1536 MNL OL, DL 34 173.

1537 MNL OL, DL 102 298.



## 2.2.28. Latkfi of Berstyanóc (Latković, Lathk de Berschanowch)

The Latkfi family descended from the same Hrvatin as the neighbouring Nelepec family. It was in 1363 that they received the castle and estate of Berstyanóc in the county of Körös in exchange for their Bosnian castle.<sup>1538</sup> Master Latk (Vlatko) was a knight of the royal court under king Louis I.<sup>1539</sup> As such he was able to obtain from the king exemption from all jurisdiction other than the king's own, and it was probably also Latk who managed to secure the tax exemption for all his estates. In 1391 the castle of Berstyanóc was for some reason confiscated by king Sigismund from his son, Nicholas, and donated to Nicholas Treutel and his brothers. Although the castle lordship escheated to the crown in 1421, it was not restored to the Latk family but was granted instead to Nicholas of Prata whose descendants bore its name later on. Nevertheless, Latk and his sons seem to have retained some portions of its appurtenances, and it was in one of the villages belonging to the castle, namely Szobocsina, that either Latk himself or his son, Nicholas, erected the *castellum* called Latkovina/Mogor.<sup>1540</sup>

Latk's son, Nicholas followed in his father's footsteps in the service of the king. It was surely not unrelated to the fact that his cousin, Paul, was also a confidential man of king Sigismund and even ban of Slavonia for a brief period. In 1407 he took part in the royal campaign led against Bosnia, whereas in 1413–1414 he served, apparently as a *familiaris* of ban Paul Csopor, in the Bosnian castle of Vesela Straža.<sup>1541</sup> In the summer of 1414 we still find him in the service of Csopor in the entourage of king Sigismund.<sup>1542</sup> Again for reasons that remain unknown to us, he mortgaged his *castellum* of Mogor to Ladislás Pekri,<sup>1543</sup> who only restored it to his son, Ladislás, in 1427.<sup>1544</sup>

The son of Nicholas, Ladislás was under age at the time of his father's death sometime before 1427, and thus came as a matter of fact under the tutelage of his kinsman, Benedict Nelepec.<sup>1545</sup> As late as 1438 it was still John Nelepec who proved the tax exemption of the lands of Ladislás in the name of the latter.<sup>1546</sup> All we know about him in later years is that he temporarily alienated the estate of Torcsec to the Rohfi of Décsé.<sup>1547</sup> He married Anne, the daughter of Michael Raveni, from whom his son called Michael was born.<sup>1548</sup>

1538 Engel, *Archontológia*, vol. I, 278.

1539 Smičiklas, *Codex diplomaticus*, vol. XVI, 116.

1540 Engel, *Archontológia*, vol. I, 278, 368.

1541 Ibid., vol. I, 547. Cf. *Zsigmondkori Oklevéltár*, vol. IV, no. 1175: "in servitiis regiiis."

1542 Ibid., vol. IV, no. 2102.

1543 In 1422 they already protest together: *ibid.*, vol. IX, no. 1045.

1544 MNL OL, DL 103 516.

1545 MNL OL, DL 44 001: Benedict Nelepec *tutor et protector* of Ladislás Latkfi.

1546 MNL OL, DL 103 587.

1547 MNL OL, DL 103 661.

1548 Ibid. For the references that Anne, mother of Michael, was the daughter of Michael Raveni see above in the chapter on the Grebeni.

The latter was likewise under age when his father died before 1460, and his tutor became the new husband of his mother, Ladislás Hermanfi of Greben. During the childhood of his stepson Hermanfi performed various services and encountered considerable expenses in order to preserve the lands of Michael, in return for which in 1468 the latter conferred upon his stepfather the entire estate of Mogor for the event of his dying heirless.<sup>1549</sup> Moreover, Michael gradually pledged or sold several of his villages to Hermanfi, who thus practically came into possession of the estate.<sup>1550</sup> Michael married the daughter of Tulbert of Berstyanóc, called Catherine, and in 1472 he pledged the estate of Mogor to his wife and her brother, Nicholas, for 2000 florins. They never really seized possession of it, however, and when Michael prepared his testament in 1475 he entrusted his children together with his estates to the protection of Ladislás Hermanfi.<sup>1551</sup> Although in 1481 Nicholas Tulbertfi sued for Mogor with reference to the letter of pledge of 1472, and in the same year Dorothy, the only surviving child of Michael Latk, also tried to acquire it by right of female inheritance,<sup>1552</sup> both attempts proved futile, and Mogor remained in the possession of Ladislás Hermanfi and later of his adopted son, Balthasar Batthyány.

### 2.2.29. Albert Lónyai (Lonjai, de Lonya)

The settlement of the Lónyai/Naményi family from the distant county of Bereg<sup>1553</sup> in Slavonia appears to have been one of the results of the “colonising” policy of governor John Hunyadi. At least Anthony Pocsaji of Namény, who is first attested as possessing the estate of Vámhida in the county of Körös, was the governor’s alispán of Temes and castellan of Tokaj.<sup>1554</sup> Yet we do not know how he acquired the estate itself. All we know is that in August 1456 he had to suffer together with Simon Nagy of Szentmárton the confiscation of his Slavonian estates for having invaded the fortification of one of count Ulrich of

1549 MNL OL, DL 100 947: “egregius Ladislaus de Greben in proteccione et conservacione possessionum suorum ac aliarum diversarum rerum suarum expeditionibus ipso Michaelē in tenera etate constituto non sine gravibus et expensis (!) suis omni auxilio favoreque et ope affuisset;” DL 103 723: Michael as the privignus of Ladislás Hermanfi.

1550 MNL OL, DL 103 733, DL 103 734.

1551 MNL OL, DL 100 858: “[...] possessiones meas universas [...] simulcum coniuge mea et prolibus ac filiabus meis committo ad egregium Ladislaum Hermani patrem meum [...].”

1552 MNL OL, DL 100 948.

1553 Németh, *Középkori Szatmár megye*, 197–98; Tibor Neumann ed., *Bereg megye hatóságának oklevelei (1299–1526)* [The Charters of Bereg County (1299–1526)] (Nyíregyháza: n.p., 2006), passim. MNL OL, DL 100 903 (their possessions in the counties of Bereg, Zemplén and Körös listed).

1554 Engel, *Archontológia*, vol. II, 196. This policy, which resulted in the temporary settlement in Slavonia of such confidential followers of Hunyadi as, for instance, Nicholas Vizaknai, deputy governor of Transylvania, is yet to be examined.

Cilli's leading retainers, Christoph Paschingar.<sup>1555</sup> Consequently the estate was held by John Vitovec and his sons until 1469/70, when it was apparently restored to Anthony Pocsaji and his relatives. We have no evidence attesting any member of the Lónyai family residing permanently in Slavonia, but it is reasonable to suppose that the estate was in fact administered by one of the neighbouring lords, Ladislás Hermanfi. The latter and his stepson, Balthasar Batthyány even acquired portions of the estate in the 1470s and 1480s, and must have thought that they would sooner or later gather in the whole peacefully from the Naményi, who explicitly referred to the unprofitability of Vámhida on account of the great distance separating it from their ancient family properties. Yet whatever they had in mind, events took a turn not quite to their liking.<sup>1556</sup>

Albert Lónyai, the son of (another) Anthony,<sup>1557</sup> entered the court of king Matthias sometime before 1483 and rapidly grew in influence there. In that year he was sent by the king to occupy the lands of Stephen Makó,<sup>1558</sup> and two years later he was engaged upon royal orders in forcing loans for the king from the towns.<sup>1559</sup> He married the widow of Akacius Szentléleki, Elizabeth Csapi,<sup>1560</sup> and thus not only acquired the extensive Slavonian estates of her wife's late husband but also laid claim again to Vámhida. Although he finally resigned his claim and sold the estate to Ladislás Hermanfi and Balthasar Batthyány, in the possession of the Szentléleki lands he remained an influential member of the Slavonian nobility for some time.<sup>1561</sup> In 1487 he was sent by king Matthias to the king of France,<sup>1562</sup> and early in 1489 we find him again in royal service.<sup>1563</sup> Unlike his kinsmen, he certainly resided in Slavonia,<sup>1564</sup> and in March 1492 he was 18th among the nobility of Croatia and Slavonia who confirmed the succession of the Habsburgs to the Hungarian throne.

It would seem that after the death of king Matthias he temporarily left the royal court, for in 1496 he is referred to as castellan of the castle of Pekrec in

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1555 MNL OL, DL 100 653.

1556 Pálosfalvi, "Grebeni Hermanfi," I, 863–64, for the references.

1557 MNL OL, DL 66 981: "Anthonius Pochay dictus de Namen, ac Andreas, alter Anthonius et Ladislaus de Lonya," DL 30 577: "Albertus filius Anthonii de Lonya."

1558 MNL OL, DL 102 627.

1559 Kubinyi, "Mátyás-kori államszervezet," 130, (n. 137).

1560 Elisabeth Csapi (from the county of Zala) is attested as the wife of Albert Lónyai in 1506: MNL OL, DL 75 733. Since he is known to have married the widow of Akacius Kasztellánfi, it is very probable that this Elizabeth was previously the latter's wife, although it is not stated in the charter itself. By this marriage he became related to the Bot of Bajna and Gorbonoki families.

1561 Pálosfalvi, "Grebeni Hermanfi," I, 864–65.

1562 MNL OL, DL 107 946/7 ecw.

1563 MNL OL, DL 19 556: "sabato proximo ante dominicam oculi de domo sua versus Wyennam ad serenissimum dominum nostrum regem ire habuisset." In September 1488 he is before the chapter of Pozsony as *aulicus regie maiestatis*: DF 227 523.

1564 See preceding note.

the service of Bartholomew Drágfi.<sup>1565</sup> Yet the case is far from evident, for in an undated letter issued at Pekrec, thus presumably written at this time, he alluded to the possibility of his having to follow the king to Bohemia.<sup>1566</sup> A further hint in this direction is that in 1494 his Slavonian estates were exempted upon royal order.<sup>1567</sup> Four years later, however, he surely returned again to the field of foreign policy: as captain of Senj he was in charge of the negotiations destined to secure the financial support of Venice for Hungary in the planned anti-Ottoman campaign.<sup>1568</sup> He remained one of the key figures of Hungarian diplomacy even after he had been removed from Senj sometime after June 1505; in 1507 he was again sent to Venice, to take the annual monetary aid of the Republic,<sup>1569</sup> whereas three years later, in connection with the league of Cambray, he left a second time for France, although he was soon instructed to return.<sup>1570</sup> His new mission was as important as the original one, however: as a person of influence and well-versed in Slavonian affairs he was ordered to mediate in the conflict between the ban of Slavonia, Andrew Both on the one hand, and the king and palatine Perényi on the other.<sup>1571</sup> It was also Lónyai who in 1510 received from the Republic of Ragusa 3000 florins upon royal orders.<sup>1572</sup>

By this time he seems to have joined the financial administration and entered the service of treasurer Peter Beriszló.<sup>1573</sup> This change was not without precedent, for already in 1505, after his removal from Senj, he had been count of the chamber of Máramaros (Maramureș, RO).<sup>1574</sup> Before 1516 he held half of the chief-thirtieth of Kassa.<sup>1575</sup> A year before he returned to Venice,

1565 MNL OL, DL 104 051.

1566 MNL OL, DL 104 637: "Si nos oportebit transire post regiam maiestatem ad Bohemiam." Wladislaw II stayed in Bohemia from the end of February to April, which dates the letter to this period.

1567 Adamček-Kampuš, *Popisi*, 4.

1568 Vilmos Fraknói, "Lónyai Albert zenggi kapitány velencei követségei" [The Venetian Embassies of Albert Lónyai, Captain of Senj], *Magyar Történelmi Tár*, 2. folyam, 7 (1877): 3–44. His deputy captain was his own brother, John.

1569 Ibid., 6. On 27 August 1507 he is ordered by treasurer Benedict Batthyány to hand over 600 florins "de pecuniis Venetorum" to Balthasar Batthyány for a very urgent affair of the king; this matter may possibly have been related to the coronation of young Louis which had been negotiated earlier in the same month: MNL OL, DL 104 330.

1570 Vilmos Fraknói, "Magyarország és a cambrayi liga" [Hungary and the League of Cambray] 1509–1511, *Századok* 16 (1882): 712.

1571 Fraknói, "Lónyai Albert követségei," 7.

1572 József Gelcich, *Ragusa és Magyarország összeköttetéseinek oklevéltára* [Documents Concerning the Relations between Ragusa and Hungary] (Budapest: n.p., 1887), 677.

1573 In 1513 he was ordered by the king to be paid 200 florins worth of salt for his services made to treasurer Peter Beriszló. István Tringli ed., *A Perényi család levéltára 1222–1526* [Charter Collection of the Perényi Family] (Budapest: Magyar Országos Levéltár-MTA Történettudományi Intézete, 2008), no. 794.

1574 Together with Benedict Batthyány: MNL OL, DL 216 741.

1575 András Kubinyi, "Szalkai László esztergomi érsek politikai szereplése" [The Political Activity of László Szalkai, Archbishop of Esztergom], in idem, *Főpapok, egyházi intézmények*

apparently for the last time.<sup>1576</sup> Yet by this time he had left Slavonia for good. Willingly or not, he restored the Slavonian estates to his stepson, Nicholas Szentléleki, and in 1517 he was registered with a mere two tenant plots on the estate of Vámhida.<sup>1577</sup> Neither he nor his son from Elisabeth Csapi, Nicholas, seem ever to have returned to Slavonia. In 1513, however, he was authorised by the king to redeem the market town of (Mező)kövesd which, as we have seen above, had been pledged to Helen of Corbavia and then held by George Kasztellánfi.<sup>1578</sup> We do not know whether he eventually managed to put his hands on the town, but even his intention to get it shows that his ambitions were already directed towards other regions than Slavonia. By that time, moreover, he had married for a second time, his wife being a woman called Anastasia, from whom he had three sons, Christopher, Peter and Farkas (Wolfgang).<sup>1579</sup> None of them is recorded as a Slavonian landowner thereafter.

### 2.2.30. Megyericsei (de Megerechye, Megwrechye, etc.)

The wealth of the Megyericsei family was founded by a man of letters, George son of Michael. George, of unknown origins, was prothonotary to Stephen, duke of Croatia and Slavonia, and then became ispán and castellan of Orbász.<sup>1580</sup> He acquired the estate of Megyericse in the middle of Körös county.<sup>1581</sup> George married at first Catherine, daughter of Michael, son of Majos (the brother of Alexander, ancestor of the Gereci family),<sup>1582</sup> and then a woman called Elisabeth, of unknown origins, but had no male offspring of either of them, only three daughters, Jacoba, Clara and Anne. His possessions consequently devolved upon the sons of Nicholas, presumably his brother.

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*és vallásosság a középkori Magyarországon* [Prelates, Church Institutions and Religious Life in Medieval Hungary] (Budapest: Magyar Egyháztörténeti Enciklopédia Munkaközösség, 1999), 153.

1576 Fraknói, "Lónyai Albert követségei," 8–9.

1577 Adamček–Kampuš, *Popisi*, 99.

1578 MNL OL, DL 108 335. His letter from Buda to the widow of George Kasztellánfi.

1579 MNL OL, DL 36 584. The letter is undated, but the title of Emeric Perényi as ban of Slavonia certainly puts it to 1512 or 1513. In 1513 Albert, his wife Anastasia and their three sons take into pledge the village of Algyó in the county of Csongrád for 800 florins: DL 106 083/101 *ecw*.

1580 On master George see Bónis, *Jogtudó értelmiség*, 80–81. More recently see Éva B. Halász, "Szlavón hercegi és báni ítélőmesterek a XIV. században" [Ducal and Banal Prothonotaries of Slavonia in the Fourteenth Century], *Acta Universitatis Szegediensis. Acta Historica*, Tomus CXXX (2009): 72–73, confusing, as others, Megyericse and Vasmegyericse. On this problem see below.

1581 Smičiklas, *Codex diplomaticus*, vol. XVII, 8: "condam magister Georgius litteratus [...] dictam possessionem Megyurechye propriis suis laboribus adquisivisse dinoscitur."

1582 *Ibid.*, vol. XII, 537–39. She had nothing to do with the Hontpázmány kindred, as maintained by B. Halász, apparently following János Karácsonyi, *Az első Lónyaiak*, (Budapest: n.p., 1904), in loc. cit. (see n. 1580 above) 73.

About the sons of Nicholas, Emeric, Gregory and Demetrius nothing is known. In 1403, however, the sons of Gregory: Demetrius and George were sentenced to loss of property because they had joined Emeric Bebek, prior of Vrana, and their estate was donated by king Sigismund to the Besenyő of Özdöge together with the *castellum* there.<sup>1583</sup> But the confiscation was not complete, and does not seem to have afflicted the other members of the family. In 1405 Demetrius Megyericsei (son of Nicholas) is referred to as a royal man, whereas between 1415 and 1430 the son of Emeric: George is shown active in the region.<sup>1584</sup>

The true breakthrough was accomplished by the sons of Demetrius and George, however. Unfortunately, reconstructing the exact descent of the family is no straightforward task, for there were two members called Demetrius and two called George. Upon the basis of supposed age, it is probable that all the Megyericsei who were active in the latter part of the middle ages descended from the two sons of Gregory mentioned in 1403.<sup>1585</sup> John, son of George, whose master title is an indication of higher education, was a notary of the secret chancery in 1429,<sup>1586</sup> and a year later he is already mentioned as the king's *familiaris*.<sup>1587</sup> We have no information on how he got in contact with the court, but reasonable hypotheses can nevertheless be proposed. We have seen above that John Megyericsei was related to the Vitéz of Kamarca, among whom Stephen Vitéz was one of the leading *familiares* of

1583 *Zsigmondkori Oklevéltár*, vol. II, no. 2686. It is to be noted that the fortification (*castellum*) in question cannot be identified with the castle of Vasmegeyericse, only mentioned from the middle of the fifteenth century, as is done by Csánki (*Körösmegye*, 40) and following him by Engel (*Archontológia*, vol. I, 455). The estate on which the castle of Vasmegeyericse (Međurić) was later erected originally belonged to the Pekri family and directly devolved onto John Maróti, to whom the construction of the fortification can reasonably be attributed. On the other hand, a *castellum* certainly existed on the estate of Megyericse (Međurača), owned by the sons of Demetrius, later during the fifteenth century, which is beyond doubt identical with the one referred to in the charter of 1403. Anyhow, the estate of the Megyericsei family on which their fortification stood is said in 1386 to have laid “*penes fluvium de Mosyna in vicinitate filiorum Jacobi de Palichna et filiorum Endrey de Mosyna*,” which excludes its identification with Vasmegeyericse which lay along the river Peker in the south.

1584 *Zsigmondkori Oklevéltár*, vol. V, nos. 925, 2004, 2297; *ibid.*, vol. VII, nos. 754, 915, 1140; *ibid.*, vol. IX, no. 504. He may also have been a royal man in 1424 (*ibid.*, vol. XI, no. 1049); MNL OL, DL 12 000.

1585 In his petition drafted in 1433 at Rome (see note 1589 below), John Megyericsei listed, alongside his mother, Susan, three *fratres*, namely George, Frank and James, and two *sorores*, Catherine and Margaret. In 1430 George, John, Catherine (Katko) and Margaret turn up as the children of George Megyericsei and Susan, but James and Frank do not, although they were surely of age at that time, which makes it evident that they were not all brothers. That it was indeed the case is proved by the fact that the father of James and Frank was called Demetrius. It is, therefore, probable that the four *fratres* were in fact cousins.

1586 MNL OL, DF 287 914.

1587 Engel, *Archontológia*, vol. I, 505.



ban Herman of Cilli; it would evidently have caused no difficulty to the king's father-in-law to get a relative of his viceban introduced into the court. Another way offered itself as well: the cousin of John, Frank, married the sister of Vitus, provost of Zagreb, step-brother of Nicholas Bocskai, who was himself a member of the court in the 1420s. It is consequently also possible that it was thanks to Nicholas that his brother-in-law found his way into the court,<sup>1588</sup> where he proved himself talented enough to stay until his death shortly after 1435. Indeed, he was among the handful of people who followed Sigismund for the imperial coronation to Rome, where he petitioned for a number of favours from the papal court.<sup>1589</sup> Of the brother of master John, called George, we know nothing; in 1430 he tried to acquire parts of the lands of Nicholas Szerecsen and Joseph the Turk, presumably by right of affinity, but apparently to no avail.<sup>1590</sup> Among the sons of Demetrius, James was castellan of Izdenc in the service of Simon Meggyesi,<sup>1591</sup> whereas Frank was several times named as a designated lawyer,<sup>1592</sup> and in January 1428 he was among the witnesses of John, bishop of Zagreb at Dombó. <sup>1593</sup> At the gathering of the leading Slavonian nobility held by ban Matko Tallóci in 1439 all three surviving male relatives, Frank, James and George (presumably the son of the other George) were listed. Indeed, Frank was one of the four persons commissioned by the ban with the execution of the decrees accepted.<sup>1594</sup> In October 1439 they were designated as royal men for the introduction of ban Matko Tallóci into the estate of Szentgyörgyvár.<sup>1595</sup> In April 1444 George was present at the assembly held at Buda.<sup>1596</sup>

In the years of civil strife which followed the death of Albert of Habsburg, and especially after 1445 the family had some difficulties in maintaining their positions. Frank belonged to the immediate entourage of the Tallóci brothers,<sup>1597</sup> which menaced to become a serious disadvantage after they had

1588 In 1436 provost Vitus and Frank and James Megyericsi try to acquire together portions of the estate of Szentandrás.

1589 Csukovits, "Nagy utazás," 34; Lukinović, *Povijesni spomenici*, vol. VI, 368.

1590 MNL OL, DL 100 475.

1591 Engel, *Archontológia*, vol. I, 332.

1592 MNL OL, DL 103 526, DL 103 539 (in the latter case together with his brother).

1593 Lukinović, *Povijesni spomenici*, vol. VI, 246.

1594 Kukuljević, *Iura regni*, part III, 20.

1595 József Teleki gr., *Hunyadiak kora Magyarországon* [The Age of the Hunyadi in Hungary], vol. X of 12 (Pest: n.p., 1853–1857), 63.

1596 *Decreta regni* 1301–1457, 336.

1597 Sometime before 1442 Petko Tallóci, then ban of Dalmatia and Croatia, invited Elisabeth Szobocsinai to the possession of Megyericsi, and accompanied her together with Frank son of Demetrius to the chapter of Csázma, where it was Frank himself who in the name of Elisabeth conferred her castle of Szobocsina on the Tallóci brothers (MNL OL, DL 100 723: "ipsa licet personaliter coram ipso capitulo astante non tamen suo ore proprio sed Franko filius Demetrii de Megywrechy predicta voce sua coram ipso capitulo taliter dixisset quod ipsa coram ipso capitulo personaliter astante castellum suum Zobochina vocatum simulcum oppido similiter Zobochyna vocato ac aliis villis [...] eidem Perkoni, Frankoni ac

been expelled from Slavonia by the counts of Cilli. In any case, Frank persuaded his wife, Veronica, to mortgage the latter's estates in the counties of Tolna and Somogy to Henry Tamási. Of the money they gained thereby Frank spent four hundred florins on the defence of his *castellum* at Megyericse and its belongings, in return for which he mortgaged to his wife his portions of the family property.<sup>1598</sup> Later on he found a more convenient solution and, together with his brother James, entered the service of John Vitovec, viceban of Slavonia and mercenary captain of the counts of Cilli.<sup>1599</sup> In 1452 Frank and James were members of the jury, led by Paul bishop of Arges and Nicholas Dombai, which had to decide in the important case concerning the castle and estate of Ludbreg. In the same year James was also referred to as prothonotary of the seat of Körös,<sup>1600</sup> a fact which accounts for the issuing of banal charters at Megyericse.<sup>1601</sup> In May 1454 Frank and James petitioned together with John Vitovec for the estates of the chapter of Csázma,<sup>1602</sup> while two years later Frank played an important role in legalising the unlawful expansion of Vitovec in Slavonia.<sup>1603</sup>

Among the sons of Demetrius, Frank seems to have died without offspring,<sup>1604</sup> whereas the only known son of John, Gregory entered the church,<sup>1605</sup> although no further details of his career are known. As mentioned above, the son of James, Peter<sup>1606</sup> contracted a marriage as advantageous as his uncle Frank: his wife was the daughter of Peter Gudovci, episcopal *vicarius* of Zagreb. Through his marriage Peter became the brother-in-law of Francis Dombai, son of viceban Nicholas. It is no surprise, therefore, that the executors of the last will of James, prepared in January 1470 at Megyericse, were Peter Gudovci and another viceban of Slavonia, Ladislav Hermanfi.<sup>1607</sup> Peter died between February 23, 1477 and March 30, 1478;<sup>1608</sup> his sons, Stephen and

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quondam Mathkoni banis necnon Johanni de eadem Tallocz priori Aurane in perpetuum contulisset"). Frank's role in the affair hints at his close relationship to the Tallóci family, although its exact nature is not known.

1598 MNL OL, DL 94 210. In 1448 Frank and his wife had already taken into pledge some portions of Ladislav Vitéz at Palicsnaszentpéter: DF 255 728.

1599 MNL OL, DL 101 749.

1600 MNL OL, DL 106 835: "Jacobi de Megwrechy [...] prothonotarii [...] sedis Crisiensis."

1601 E.g. MNL OL, DL 103 627. Confirmed with the seal of viceban John Vitovec. James also obtained some land in four villages in the county of Körös in 1455: DF 275 008.

1602 MNL OL, DL 102 124.

1603 Pálosfalvi, "Grebeni Hermanfi," I, 847–48.

1604 In January 1464 his widow, Veronica is introduced by right of pledge into portions of Palicsnaszentpéter: MNL OL, DF 275 013.

1605 Lukinović, *Povijesni spomenici*, vol. VI, 267.

1606 MNL OL, DF 255 786.

1607 MNL OL, DF 231 570.

1608 On February 23, 1477 he is still mentioned alive as a neighbour: MNL OL, DL 33 429; a year later his widow is referred to: *Levélrtári Közlemények* 6 (1928): 159–60.

Bernard were still minors, for they were put under the tutelage of their maternal grandfather, Peter Gudovci.<sup>1609</sup>

The sons of George, son of George, Emeric, Matthias and Francis, although sometimes also titled *egregius*,<sup>1610</sup> do not seem ever to have left their native county. They are mainly enlisted as neighbours at introductions, such as in 1471 at Polositica,<sup>1611</sup> in 1475 at Szobocsina,<sup>1612</sup> the next year at Orbona<sup>1613</sup> and in 1479 at Tamasovc.<sup>1614</sup> Emeric married Veronica, daughter of Emeric Szász of Tamasovc,<sup>1615</sup> and quarrelled for the remaining possessions of his father-in-law with Ladislav Nyári, administrator of bishop Oswald of Zagreb.<sup>1616</sup> He remained in contact with his brother-in-law, John Szász of Tamasovc, for in 1498 his brother, Matthias was involved together with John in an act of violence committed at Megyericse to the detriment of the castellan placed by the chapter of Csázma in their *castellum* of Polositica.<sup>1617</sup> In 1493 Emeric and Matthias were designated as royal men by Nicholas Bánfi, ispán of Verőce,<sup>1618</sup> whereas in the mid 1490s Emeric was elected as szolgabíró in the county of Körös.<sup>1619</sup> Both Emeric and Francis pledged parts of their portion at Megyericse,<sup>1620</sup> but these losses were probably compensated by the acquisition of the possession of Grebenna, which they received from Nicholas Mikcsec in 1484 with the stipulation that it would escheat to the latter in case of all three brothers dying without heirs.<sup>1621</sup> Later on the portions of Matthias as well as the possession of Grebenna came into the hands of a certain Paul Bubanić,<sup>1622</sup> presumably through his marriage with Matthias's daughter Margaret; in any case, in 1517 we again find them in the possession of the widow of Matthias, Anne. Francis and Emeric seem to have died before 1507, when their portions at Megyericse were in the hands of the third brother, Matthias.<sup>1623</sup> The latter had a son called George, who surely died heirless before December 1519,

1609 MNL OL, DL 34 311 (1481): “magistro Petro de Gudowcz tutore bonorum possessionariorum filiorum quondam Petri de Megywreche.”

1610 MNL OL, DF 255 594, DL 33 427.

1611 MNL OL, DF 255 594.

1612 MNL OL, DL 276 827.

1613 MNL OL, DL 33 427.

1614 MNL OL, DF 218 978. See also DL 34 311 (1481): “Francisco de eadem Megywreche.”

1615 MNL OL, DF 255 907.

1616 Stipišić-Šamšalović, *Isprave*, no. 3141. See section on the Tamasovci family.

1617 MNL OL, DF 275 023.

1618 MNL OL, DF 255 918.

1619 MNL OL, DF 252 208, DF 256 929.

1620 Stipišić-Šamšalović, *Isprave*, no. 2681; MNL OL, DL 20 167.

1621 Stipišić-Šamšalović, *Isprave*, no. 3004.

1622 Adamček-Kampuš, *Popisi*, 67. Paul Bubanić, of unknown origins, also had portions on the lands of the bishopric of Zagreb in the county of Zagreb, at Fintics in the county of Körös, and was registered together with members of the Vitéz of Kamarca family at Kernin.

1623 *Ibid.*, 35.

when his possession of Grebenna was donated by king Louis II for *defectio seminis* to duke Lawrence Újlaki.<sup>1624</sup>

About the sons of Peter, Bernard and Stephen, even less is known. In 1495 they are mentioned in some cases of violent trespass,<sup>1625</sup> and in 1506 Bernard was viceban of Jajce;<sup>1626</sup> he died before 1517, when his widow is mentioned. The latter, called Helen, may have been a daughter of Valentine Pálfi of Obramovcszentmihály.<sup>1627</sup> Bernard had a son called Christopher, who married the sister of Louis Pekri junior.<sup>1628</sup> After 1526 he is attested as a *familiaris* of bishop Simon of Zagreb.<sup>1629</sup> This Christopher was once referred to as the *carnalis* brother of John Megyericsei, the famous royal secretary and canon of Transylvania.<sup>1630</sup> This piece of information is certainly in keeping with another charter which tells us that the mother of Christopher Megyericsei was the stepmother (*glossa*) of archdeacon John, who would accordingly have been a half-brother of Christopher.<sup>1631</sup> John Megyericsei is surely the same person as the *magister Johannes* who in 1517, the very year of his death, is registered as having 20 sessions at Megyericse.<sup>1632</sup> The case is not as evident as it would seem at first sight, however. For John Megyericsei is known to have been born around 1470, whereas Bernard, his presumed father, was still apparently under age as late as 1478. The key to the mystery is provided by a charter from 1491, which lists the three sons of Lucy Gudovci (and of Peter Megyericsei, of course), master John, Bernard and Stephen.<sup>1633</sup> John and Bernard were thus brothers, although we do not know what caused the later confusion in the charters. It is, moreover, possible to offer two probable hypotheses to account for the alleged (and self-confessed) relationship of master John to the famous poet, Janus Pannonius, which had frequently but vainly been debated by historians so far. It is probable that Sophie, the wife of John Csezmicei, was a member of the Megyericsei family, which in itself would account for the relationship.<sup>1634</sup> If our hypothesis that the wife of Bernard Megyericsei was the daughter of Valentine Pálfi is true, the connection is even closer, for the wife of Valentine himself was the daughter of Peter Csezmicei and Margaret Mikcsec of Cirkvena.<sup>1635</sup> Christopher Megyericsei was still alive in 1543, and

1624 MNL OL, DF 274 994.

1625 Eg. MNL OL, DL 106 875, DL 46 314.

1626 Thallóczy–Horváth, *Jajcza*, 201: “vicebano nostro Veneraldo de Megyeriche.”

1627 MNL OL, DF 277 175/543–45 ecw.

1628 Laszowski, *Monumenta Habsburgica*, vol. I, 319: (Louis Pekri:) “sororius meus Christoforus Megyerehyey, qui sororem meam carnalem habet in uxorem.” In 1543 this Christopher is referred to as possessing the fortalitium of Gudovc: Adamček–Kampuš, *Popisi*, 136.

1629 Laszowski, *Monumenta Habsburgica*, vol. I, 240.

1630 MNL OL, DF 232 500.

1631 MNL OL, DF 277 175/417–19 ecw.

1632 Adamček–Kampuš, *Popisi*, 105.

1633 MNL OL, DF 231 837.

1634 DF 277 175/009 ecw.

1635 MNL OL, DF 232 021. See the chapter on the Pálfi family below.

the Farkas (Wolfgang) Megyericsei who is listed among the owners of Kustyerolc in 1576 seems to have been his son from the daughter of Louis Pekri.<sup>1636</sup>

### 2.2.31. Mindszenti (de Mendzenth)

There were several possessions called Mindszent in the county of Körös, and even more in Slavonia, and it is not easy to make a distinction between them and between the families they were owned by. The village called Mindszent which concerns us now was situated in the region of Dobrakucsa and its other name was Habjanovc/Fabianovc; it had appurtenances in at least six neighbouring settlements.<sup>1637</sup> It was named after a certain Fabianus, who must have lived in the thirteenth century,<sup>1638</sup> but is impossible to identify; nor is it possible to decide whether the late medieval Mindszenti were the direct descendants of this Fabianus or not. We know very little about the family until 1466, when John, the son of Paul, as it seems, became the alispán of bishop John in the county of Pozsega.<sup>1639</sup> This Paul, son of John, had been szolgabíró in the county of Körös, and was also active as a lawyer.<sup>1640</sup> A year later, in 1467, John was administering the abbey of Béla for his lord,<sup>1641</sup> and in 1469 became his viceban and at the same time ispán of Zagreb. It is possible that the Matthias Mindszenti, who is said in 1465 to have received the abbey *in commendam* was his brother.<sup>1642</sup> We do not know by what right he and his brother Nicholas<sup>1643</sup> laid claim upon the estate of Garignica,<sup>1644</sup> of which John did eventually obtain some parts together with the Pekri,<sup>1645</sup> what is beyond doubt is that in 1470 the three sons of Paul, John, Matthias and Nicholas, took

1636 Adamček–Kampuš, *Popisi*, 136, 288.

1637 MNL OL, DF 277 175/291 ecw: “*possessionis Myndzenth predictae alio nomine Habyanowcz.*” It was also known as Benedikovc (“Benedykowcz alio nomine Fabianowcz,” DF 261 977), perhaps after Benedict Mindszenti who is mentioned in 1414. In this case this Benedict and his sons, Nicholas and Stephen, were also members of the Mindszenti family which concerns us here.

1638 Csánki, *Körösmegye*, 79: “*ecclesia Omnium Sanctorum in possessione filiorum Fabiani.*”

1639 MNL OL, DL 34 216.

1640 *Levél-tári Közlemények* 11 (1933): 79 (1439); MNL OL, DL 103 615; *Levél-tári Közlemények* 12 (1934): 122.

1641 MNL OL, DF 255 799: “*tempore quo Johannes litteratus de Mendzenth abbatiam de Bela in persona [...] Johannis episcopi ecclesie Quinqueecclesiensis tenuisset.*”

1642 Andrić, “Benediktinski samostan,” 51, n. 79. John did have a brother called Matthias, who was certainly not a cleric in 1470, however. MNL OL, DL 94 500.

1643 This Nicholas may have been the *familiaris* of ban Vitovec around 1461: MNL OL, DL 94 536.

1644 MNL OL, DL 103 712.

1645 MNL OL, DL 103 716.

half of the estate of Dobrakucsa into pledge, together with the castle there.<sup>1646</sup> Since they also had portions at Mellesovc,<sup>1647</sup> for some time they certainly counted among the wealthiest nobility of the region.

Their glory did not last for long, however. The castle of Dobrakucsa was soon taken from them,<sup>1648</sup> and John as one of the leading *familiares* of the bishop of Pécs fell together with his lord. He was dead in 1481, so only three of his own *familiares* could be proscribed then for having taken part in the events of 1471.<sup>1649</sup> Nicholas Mindszenti was nevertheless sometimes accorded the *egregius* title,<sup>1650</sup> and he was even capable of temporarily enlarging his landed wealth, when he was adjudged at the banal seat as many as thirty inhabited tenant sessions on the appurtenances of Gordova.<sup>1651</sup> In 1475 he was serving bishop Oswald of Zagreb.<sup>1652</sup> Yet his sons, John and Francis<sup>1653</sup> merely turn up as designated royal men,<sup>1654</sup> and Francis is once referred to as the castellan of Kristallóc.<sup>1655</sup> The daughter of Ladislav Mindszenti, who was szolgabíró of Körös in the 1470s,<sup>1656</sup> was married by a person called Andrew, who was at some time *provisor* of the castle of Pekrec.<sup>1657</sup> In 1505 the portions of the same Ladislav were donated by king Wladislaw to his courtier (*aulicus*), Peter Banych of Zrebernagorycza, who apparently never effectively took possession of them, however.<sup>1658</sup> The last time the members of the Mindszenti family appear is in 1524, when Francis prohibited in the name of his kinsmen some members of the Bátori and Batthyány families from the occupation of Mindszent and its appurtenances.<sup>1659</sup>

### 2.2.32. Musinai/Berzencei (de Musyna, Berzenche)

The family descended from the illustrious Péc kindred, to which the Marcali belonged as well.<sup>1660</sup> They obtained their possessions beyond the river Drava,

1646 MNL OL, DL 94 500, DL 94 501, DF 278421–423 (“egregiis Johanni, Mathie et Nicolao filiis quondam Pauli de Myndzenth”).

1647 MNL OL, DF 268 097.

1648 See the charter cited in the previous note.

1649 Tringli, “Szlavóniai közgyűlés,” 316.

1650 MNL OL, DL 103 801, DL 107 113, and see the charter cited in the next note.

1651 MNL OL, DF 279 492.

1652 MNL OL, DF 261 839.

1653 MNL OL, DL 106 876.

1654 MNL OL, DL 101 421.

1655 MNL OL, DF 279 490.

1656 MNL OL, DL 107 013, DL 107 017, DL 45 542. Together with Ladislav Mindszenti another Ladislav, called of Benedikovc, also emerges as szolgabíró; he was the son of Gallus (DF 231 610), and may also have belonged to the same family.

1657 MNL OL, DL 94 314.

1658 MNL OL, DF 261 977.

1659 MNL OL, DF 277 175/291 ecw.

1660 Engel, *Középkori magyar genealógia*, Péc nem 1. tábla: zalai ág.



basically the future estate of Musina (Šandrovac, CRO), in 1330 through an exchange with their kinsmen belonging to the Marcali branch of the kindred.<sup>1661</sup> The bulk of their lands lay in the county of Somogy, however, where they had portions in more than thirty villages.<sup>1662</sup> By 1406 two fortifications had been erected at Szentersébet and Musina respectively. George, son of Lorand was alispán of Tolna in 1397,<sup>1663</sup> then joined Pipo Ozorai and became his castellan of Sárvár.<sup>1664</sup> In 1422 he accompanied king Sigismund for his Bohemian expedition,<sup>1665</sup> and in 1424 he was still attached to the court.<sup>1666</sup> Thirty years earlier, in 1391 he bought, together with his cousins Stephen and Luke, sons of Demetrius, the possession of Oresja, in the vicinity of Musina, for 600 florins.<sup>1667</sup> Another cousin of George, Andrew son of Stephen, was one of those who sealed the charter concerning the inheritance of duke Albert of Habsburg in September 1402 at Pressburg,<sup>1668</sup> whereas his son, Nicholas, was present at the assembly of Buda in April 1444.<sup>1669</sup>

It is in connection with the fortification which was erected at Musina probably in the first years of Sigismund's reign that we learn some details about their history during the tumultuous years of the mid-fifteenth century. For in 1468 Sandrin, another son of George, petitioned king Matthias for a license to construct a new fortification at his possession of Berzence, in the county of Somogy, instead of the one standing at Szentersébet, in the same county, to which they had been forced to move from Musina, razed to the ground before their leave. The reason of their leaving Slavonia had been their inability to defend the *castellum* in the years of trouble, and the fear that it

1661 Iván Borsa, "A somogyi konvent oklevelei az Országos Levéltárban: forrásközlés. Negyedik közlemény" [The Charters of the Convent of Somogy in the National Archives. Fourth Part], in *Somogy Megye Múltjából*. Levéltári évkönyv 29 (1998), ed. Sándor Bócsa, no. 317.

1662 MNL OL, DL 9198. This charter, in which king Sigismund donated to George, son of Lorand the royal right in all his possessions in the counties of Somogy and Körös, and which was confirmed and transcribed in a letter of privilege in 1418, was accepted as authentic by Csánki (*Történelmi földrajz*, vol. II, 664) and Mályusz (*Zsigmondkori Oklevéltár*, vol. II/1, no. 4662), but later rejected by the editors of the *Zsigmondkori Oklevéltár*. It is likewise referred to as a late forgery by Tibor Koppány (*Középkori kastélyok*, 218), with reference to oral communication by Pál Engel. The layout of the charter, however, is in perfect accordance with the practice of the age, and so are all the other data, such as, for instance, the list of officeholders. Therefore, I see no reason to reject its testimony and accordingly accept its information as genuine. There exists an apparently early sixteenth-century copy of the charter under the same archival sign; it may have been this which deceived Engel.

1663 Engel, *Archontológia*, vol. I, 207.

1664 *Ibid.*, 405.

1665 *Zsigmondkori Oklevéltár*, vol. IX no. 38.

1666 He was then sent from the court together with the prothonotaries of the palatine and the judge royal to witness a land dispute in the county of Veszprém: *ibid.*, vol. XI, no. 578.

1667 *Ibid.*, vol. I, no. 1965.

1668 Engel, *Archontológia*, vol. I, 494.

1669 *Decreta regni 1301–1457*, 335.

should fall into enemy hands and thus become a source of menace for the neighbouring region.<sup>1670</sup>

These events could be dated to the years following the death of king Ladislas V, which were equally referred to as a period of troubles, but some circumstances seem to prove that they in fact happened earlier. For in 1461 Thomas Székely, then prior of Vrana, stated that some charters concerning the lands of the priory in the county of Somogy had fallen into the hands of Sandrin, son of George, then his declared enemy, at the time when the counts of Cilli had occupied the castles of the Hospitallers.<sup>1671</sup> It was in 1445 that the counts of Cilli conquered the Hospitaller estates in Slavonia, but at that time the prior was John (Jovan) Tallóci, who even died at the siege of Hrasztovica (Hrastovica, CRO). Yet after 1445 it was very improbable for a supporter of the Cilli family to have felt the need to flee from Slavonia. Moreover, by 1444 at the latest a *castellum* had been built at Berzence/Szenterzsébet,<sup>1672</sup> where it was possible to move.<sup>1673</sup> If this is indeed the case, the relocation of the Musinai family must have happened during the civil war of 1440–1441, when John Vitovec, the mercenary captain of the counts of Cilli, did occupy the southern counties of Hungary for some months.<sup>1674</sup> At the same time some villages owned by the Musinai in the county of Somogy were occupied by Ladislas and Nicholas Kanizsai, which again is a proof that they had taken the side of young Ladislas V in the civil war which followed the death of king Albert.<sup>1675</sup>

In the petition mentioned above, Sandrin justified his request to build another fortification with the quarrels which emerged within the family because of their multitude.<sup>1676</sup> In fact, in the 1450s at least six adult males shared the family possessions, or rather the part which remained of it.<sup>1677</sup> For in the course of the 1450s and 1460s they gradually pledged considerable portions of them. The majority was alienated by Ladislas, son of George,

1670 MNL OL, DF 209 346: "alias ipse et fratres sui in regno nostro Sclavonie ex annuencia predecessorum nostrorum regum in loco Musina vocato castellum habuissent, sed tempore medio cum gravissima in regno nostro disturbia orirentur, sencientes ad conservacionem ipsius castelli se inhabiles et insufficientes esse, castellum ipsum ne exinde si propter eorum inhabilitatem ad manus alienas devenire contingeret regno et regnicolis nostris dampna et incommoda committerentur, funditus distraxissent, et tandem post distraccionem ipsius castelli omnes se cum omnibus fratribus et familia suis ad quoddam aliud castellum eorum in possessione Sentersebeth erectum transtulissent."

1671 MNL OL, DF 261 897.

1672 The two in fact constituted a single settlement, see Horváth, "Kastélyépítési engedélyek," 17.

1673 *Zichy család okmánytára*, vol. IX, 86.

1674 Pálosfalvi, "Cilleiek és Tallóciak," 53.

1675 MNL OL, DL 70 409.

1676 "tum propter multitudinem tum etiam propter discordanciam que ex huiusmodi multitudine inter eos interim nasceretur."

1677 Engel, *Középkori magyar genealógia*, loc. cit. Alongside the kinsmen listed there, Philip, son of Peter, also had a son called Stephen (MNL OL, DL 98 001), whereas Nicholas, son of George, fathered a son called Martin.

Martin, son of Nicholas, and John, son of Michael,<sup>1678</sup> and these portions were eventually redeemed by a newcomer in the region, namely George Forster, who may have stayed in the service of the Ernuszt family from the outset.<sup>1679</sup> Sandrin, son of George, who at first tried to regain the family lands before the law, and acquired some new pieces himself,<sup>1680</sup> appears to have acquiesced in their loss in 1468, when he resigned them in favour of Forster before the king himself at Pressburg.<sup>1681</sup> Instead of the *castellum* at Szenterszébet, which was possessed entirely by Forster thereafter, Sandrin, by virtue of the royal license, built another fortification on his own portion, and consequently two *castella* stood on the Berzencei lands in Somogy.<sup>1682</sup>

Moreover, one of the sons of Sandrin, Bernard, even entered the service of Forster, who in the meantime had become castellan of Szentgyörgyvár.<sup>1683</sup> Yet in 1474 Forster and Sandrin made a new agreement, or rather it was forced upon the latter by his powerful neighbour, according to which all the Berzencei lands in the county of Somogy were left in the hands of Forster, whereas Sandrin and his two sons contented themselves with the estates in Slavonia and retired there for all; at the same time the mutual inheritance of both parties was stipulated for the case of the other's dying heirless.<sup>1684</sup> It appears to have been in connection with this "return" south of the Drava that the *castellum* at Musina was rebuilt. In 1481, when, after the death of Sandrin, Andrew Justh and his wife tried to have themselves introduced into his lands, alongside the estate of Musina only three villages in Somogy were enumerated.<sup>1685</sup> It is true, however, that by this time all the collateral kinsmen of Sandrin have disappeared, so whatever had remained of the family patrimony, especially in Slavonia, was exclusively owned by the descendants of Sandrin.

In the 1480s the sons of Sandrin, Bernard and Nicholas, were the only surviving members of their kin, but we do not know considerably more about

1678 MNL OL, DL 98 000, DL 15 167, DL 16 420, DL 70 406.

1679 MNL OL, DL 16 529, DL 98 001, DL 98 003.

1680 MNL OL, DL 15 396.

1681 MNL OL, DF 209 342: "desiderans eiusdem Georgii mutuam habere societatem ut cum eo simul iunctus nedom res suas mutuis auxiliis comelius tueri possit," as he argued very reasonably.

1682 Horváth, "Kastélyépítési engedélyek," 17.

1683 MNL OL, DL 103 765.

1684 MNL OL, DF 209 368.

1685 Borsa, *Justh család levéltára*, nos. 319–20. See Horváth, "Kastélyépítési engedélyek," 18. In december 1478 the house of Sandrin and his two sons at Musina was burnt (MNL OL, DL 33 135: "domum et curiam ignis voragine comburi et concremari [...] fecissent"), whereas in 1481 there certainly stood a *castellum* on the same place ("ad facies [...] possessionum Mosyna, Meglech ac castelli in eadem Mosyna habiti," DL 63 294, abstract: Borsa, *Justh család levéltára*, no. 320). In 1480 Sandrin is cited from his possession of Szentlászló, in the county of Somogy: DL 18 379.

them. The identity of their mother is uncertain,<sup>1686</sup> their stepmother, that is, the second wife of Sandrin was Elisabeth Balassa, the daughter of Ladislas Balassa.<sup>1687</sup> This relationship could have become the source of considerable social influence, especially after the brother of Elisabeth, Francis, had become the brother-in-law of Emeric Perényi, palatine of Hungary from 1504. There is no trace of their growing prestige, however, and they only occur in our sources in connection with their Slavonian possessions, mostly as neighbours or as designated royal men, which proves beyond doubt that they in fact lived in the county of Körös.<sup>1688</sup> Indeed, it was apparently Elizabeth Balassa who initiated the alienation of her late husband's Slavonian lands in favour of her brother-in-law, Andrew Justh.<sup>1689</sup>

The situation changed somewhat in the second decade of the sixteenth century. Then four members of the family turn up in our sources; one of them, Bernard, was the son of Sandrin, already mentioned above. The other three, John, Sandrin and George, were the sons of Nicholas, although perhaps from two consecutive marriages.<sup>1690</sup> The latter George is mentioned but once as a witness, when Francis Both of Bajna commissioned lawyers at Kristallóc in 1509. He may thus have belonged to the retinue of either Francis himself or their host, Balthasar Batthyány. As for John, he became secretary of Thomas Bakóc, archbishop of Esztergom.<sup>1691</sup> This confidential position helped his brother, Sandrin, to a very advantageous marriage. He was betrothed with Dorothy Erdődi, sister of Simon, bishop of Zagreb. Whether this marriage was the cause or already the consequence of their growing influence is unknown; what is sure is that from the late 1510s John and his brother Sandrin tried with every possible means to stop the family's social decline. At first they successfully ousted their uncle, Bernard, from the family estates in Slavonia; after Bernard had been convicted of infidelity, his portions at Musina were donated to John and Sandrin in 1518.<sup>1692</sup> Somewhat later they laid claim again

1686 Only her name, Julia, is known, and that she had brought at least nine hundred florins into the marriage: MNL OL, DL 15 396.

1687 Borsa, *Balassa család levéltára*, no. 422.

1688 MNL OL, DF 290 158; DF 231 830; DL 33 454 (first, as it seems, in the form of Sandorfy); DL 46 272.

1689 Andrew Justh was the husband of Barbara Balassa, the sister of Elisabeth. See Engel, *Középkori magyar genealógia*, Zólyomi rokonság 2. tábla: Balassa (gyarmati).

1690 John and Sandrin were surely brothers (eg. MNL OL, DL 101 600), whereas George is once referred to have been their carnalis brother (DF 209 459).

1691 MNL OL, DL 67 885 (1517): "egregius Joannes Sandorfy de Berzencze secretarius reverendissimi in Christo patris domini cardinalis Strigoniensis." See also DF 209 453, DF 209 454, DF 209 458.

1692 MNL OL, DF 209 451, DF 209 452, DF 209 453, DF 209 456. Bernard was accused of "plurima nephanda scelera et sacrilegia perpetrasse ac in thorum nobilis domine Barbare consortis sue quendam Mathiam Horwath latronem et predonem publicum et proscriptum admisisse et cum ea adulterari ex eaque prolem bastardam procreari permisisse et procurasse."

to the two family fortifications and their appurtenances in Somogy with reference to the contract once made with George Forster and his wife, who also had died in the meantime. King Louis did confirm the contract of 1474, and granted them the royal right in the estates, but the brothers proved impotent against John Bornemissza, one of the pillars of the government from 1500 on, who had acquired them via his marriage with the widow of Forster.<sup>1693</sup> Consequently, in February 1526 John and Sandrin turned to Francis Batthyány, ban of Slavonia, and asked him to assist them in getting back their legal due, contracting a treaty of mutual inheritance for the case the ban prevailed. It was to no avail, however, for both estates were undisturbedly possessed until at least 1527 by Bornemissza. There is apparently no trace of the family in Slavonia thereafter.

### 2.2.33. Nelepec

The settlement of the Bosnian Hrvatinić family in Slavonia from which the Nelepec family originated was a consequence of the marriage of king Louis I. In order to secure his rule over the newly acquired portion of Bosnia, Louis forced some of the indigenous families there to hand over their castles in exchange for estates in Slavonia.<sup>1694</sup> Thus the sons of Paul (Hrvatinić) received the castle of Dobrakucsa in the county of Körös, and one of them, Nelepec (Nelipac), became the founder of the Nelepec family. Nelepec attached himself to Frank Szécsényi and was his alispán in the county of Zala for some time. His brother, Gregory was knight of the royal court in the late 1350s.<sup>1695</sup>

Master Benedict, the son of Nelepec from his wife Elisabeth Kasztellánfi, was in 1408–1409 alispán of the remote county of Trencsén in the service of palatine Nicholas Garai.<sup>1696</sup> As late as 1423 he was still in the service of Garai, for in that year he was sent by his lord as an envoy to John Frangepán.<sup>1697</sup> Yet neither he nor his sons seem to have played an outstanding role either in Slavonia or outside during the rest of Sigismund's reign, although for some time they even held three fortifications in the region. That of Mogor in the county of Körös seems to have concerned them by way of their kinship with its owner, Nicholas son of Latk. Latk (Vlatko) was in fact the cousin of Nelepec, and followed him some years later to Slavonia, where he had at first received the castle of Berstyanóc, and later his son built that of Mogor.<sup>1698</sup> In the 1420s

1693 MNL OL, DF 209 468, DF 209 469.

1694 Pál Engel, "A 14–15. századi bosnyák–magyar kapcsolatok kérdéséhez" [On the Problem of Hungaro-Bosnian Relations in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries], in idem, *Honor, vár, ispánság*, 498–99.

1695 On both see Engel, *Archontológia*, vol. I, 236, 482.

1696 Ibid., vol. I, 213.

1697 *Zsigmondkori Oklevéltár*, vol. X, no. 1238.

1698 For the references see the section on the Latkfi above.

and 1430s Benedict Nelepec was the tutor of the son of Nicholas, Ladislás, and held as such the estate of Mogor.<sup>1699</sup> In 1416 Benedict contracted a treaty of mutual inheritance with David Lack, ban of Slavonia, which, while apparently was never realised, is certainly an indication of his elevated status.<sup>1700</sup> We do not know how the family obtained the castle of Levač in the county of Orbász; all that is known is that in 1449 they mortgaged it to Radivoy, brother of the king of Bosnia, for 2000 florins.<sup>1701</sup> In August 1442 Benedict was one of the Slavonian envoys sent to the general assembly at Buda.<sup>1702</sup> He also founded a Pauline monastery on his estate of Dobrakucsá.<sup>1703</sup>

The alienation of Levač marked the beginning of a long series of events which by the second half of the reign of king Matthias had almost completely undermined the initial social standing of the family. In 1455 Paul, son of Benedict mortgaged in the name of his close relatives one third of the appurtenances of the estate of Dobrakucsá to Nicholas Dombai and Nicholas Szentléleki for the enormous sum of 6000 florins.<sup>1704</sup> In view of this sum the deal may have been a purely nominal one, and in any case neither Dombai nor Szentléleki seems ever to have held any portion of Dobrakucsá. In 1462 it was again Paul, son of Benedict, who gave to John Geréb of Vingárt and his sons the castle of Bálványos (Unguraş, RO) in return for all those “friendly and brotherly favours” that he had made for him and his kinsmen before the king and the queen.<sup>1705</sup> Bálványos pertained to the Nelepec by virtue of the contract of mutual inheritance that they had entered into with David Lack, but there is no evidence attesting that they took possession of it; consequently, it may have been but their rights in it that they transferred to Geréb.<sup>1706</sup> One of the grandsons of Benedict, John son of John served Ladislás Hunyadi for some time, and died of pestilence as his *familiaris* sometime after 2 April

1699 MNL OL, DL 103 522, DL 103 524, DL 103 571. In 1438 it was John, son of Benedict, who presented the documents testifying to the tax exemption of the lands of Ladislás Latkfi: DL 103 587.

1700 *Zsigmondkori Oklevéltár*, vol. V, no. 2369.

1701 MNL OL, DL 44 418; Engel, *Archontológia*, vol. I, 362. Lajos Thallóczy and Sándor Horváth, eds., *Magyarország melléktartományainak oklevéltára III. Alsó-szlavóniai okmánytár (Dubicza, Orbász és Szana vármegyéek) 1244–1710* [Charters Illustrating the History of the Lower Slavonian Counties of Dubica, Orbász and Szana 1244–1710] (Budapest: MTA, 1912), 174–78; MNL OL, DL 88 244.

1702 Teleki, *Hunyadiak kora*, vol. X, 120.

1703 Romhányi, *Kolostorok*, 21.

1704 MNL OL, DL 102 128.

1705 MNL OL, DF 278 419: “in presenciis regie et reginalis maiestatum.”

1706 On Bálványos see Géza Hegyi, “Bálványosvár és a nagypolitika (1456–1463). A Várdai és a losonci Dezsőfi család küzdelme a bálványosi uradalomért” [The Castle of Bálványos and High Politics (1456–1463). The Struggle of the Várdai and Dezsőfi of Losonc Families for the Estate of Bálványos], *Erdélyi Múzeum* 67 (2005) n. 3–4: 105–30; Engel: *Archontológia*, vol. I, 271–72.



1455.<sup>1707</sup> The brother of Paul, Dominic joined after 1456 John Vitovec, ban of Slavonia; he was present together with the ban in the royal camp at Szeged in the autumn of 1458 and continued to serve Vitovec after the latter had broken with king Mathias and gone over to Frederick of Habsburg.<sup>1708</sup>

In January 1464 Ambrose and Peter Török of Enying invaded the castle of Dobrakucsá, expelled Dominic together with his wife and brothers, and confiscated all the titles of property rights stored there. Moreover, they devastated all the possessions belonging to the castle, robbed the churches, among them the monastery of the Pauline hermits, captivated the tenants, and finally forced Dominic to go with them to the chapter of Pécs and confer upon them the estate of Dobrakucsá under conditions “as nefarious as they were able to think of.”<sup>1709</sup> The motivations of this action are not clear. Ambrose Török was one of the newly rising, unscrupulous lords of the 1460s: at first a leading *familiaris* of Nicholas Újlaki, he then entered the service of king Matthias and became ispán of Sopron and later royal castellan of Krupa in the county of Zagreb.<sup>1710</sup> Some years earlier, as castellan of Nicholas Újlaki, he carried out an almost identical coup in the county of Somogy against the estate of Ders Szerdahelyi, and other sources show him to have been a person of singular cruelty even by the measures of the age.<sup>1711</sup> It has to be added, however, that the wife of Peter Török was Catherine, the daughter of Paul Nelepec, although we do not know whether this marriage preceded or followed the attack against Dobrakucsá.<sup>1712</sup>

Whatever the reasons, the Nelepecs were later allowed to return to their castle, but their position deteriorated constantly. In 1466 Dominic mortgaged eleven tenant plots on the appurtenances of Dobrakucsá to Demetrius Csúpor, bishop of Győr.<sup>1713</sup> Three years later he was forced to dispose of further portions of the estate in order to pay the widow of his brother Paul her dower.<sup>1714</sup> In 1470 half of the estate of Dobrakucsá was mortgaged for 500 florins to the neighbouring family of Mindszenti, one of whose members, John was then viceban of bishop John. The transfer was the somewhat belated consequence of the fact that Paul and Dominic Nelepec had previously been sentenced to capital punishment in a case against Paul Garázda; Dominic himself, and the sons of Paul thus needed money to redeem their lands.<sup>1715</sup>

1707 MNL OL, DL 103 655: “ex relatibus ac veridicis attestacionibus quamplurimorum militum et nobilium [...] consociorum eiusdem quondam Jankonis filii Johannis qui antecederet per quamplurima tempora in serviciis quondam illustris principis domini Ladislai de Hwnyad [...] unacum eodem quondam Jankone continuatim perseverassent.”

1708 Ibid. In May 1463 he was pardoned among the familiares of Vitovec: MNL OL, DF 233 405.

1709 MNL OL, DL 103 681: “prout nefarius excogitare potuissent.”

1710 Kubinyi, “Kaposújtári uradalom,” 29.

1711 MNL OL, DF 255 788.

1712 MNL OL, DL 106 640.

1713 MNL OL, DL 103 697.

1714 MNL OL, DL 16 792.

1715 MNL OL, DF 278 421–278 423.

This time the affair was surely not fictitious, for Nicholas Mindszenti can be shown to have resided in the castle in the early 1470s.<sup>1716</sup> He did not have much time to get comfortable in his new residence, however, for soon after another newcomer arrived with whom it proved impossible to contend: John Ernuszt, ban of Slavonia.

Ernuszt went on the offensive already before his appointment as ban in November 1473. In March 1473 he sent his *familiaris*, Nicholas Pozsegai (later his viceban) to Slavonia. Pozsegai found Nicholas Mindszenti in the town of Zdenc, captivated him and took him to the castle of Sztrigó (Štrigova, CRO). Nicholas was later transferred to the *castellum* of Kristallóc, and while a prisoner Pozsegai besieged and took the castle of Dobrakucsa for his lord.<sup>1717</sup> Consequently, Ladislav Nelepec and Peter Török, now allies against the common enemy, erected a new *castellum* on one of the possessions belonging to Dobrakucsa, and set up their residence there. Not for a long time, however, for in November 1474 they were trapped by Nicholas Pozsegai, who forced them to hand over the *castellum*, had it demolished and attached its appurtenances to Dobrakucsa.<sup>1718</sup>

Despite the evident illegality of his acquisition, Ernuszt remained in possession of the estate, which devolved after his death in the spring of 1476 upon his widow and sons, bishop Sigismund and John the younger. In 1477, however, king Matthias forced them to resign Dobrakucsa in order to keep the rest of their wealth in Hungary and Slavonia,<sup>1719</sup> and he donated the castle to one of his foreign mercenary captains, called Nicholas Lusicky (Mikuláš Lušický z Čecvíc).<sup>1720</sup> The latter Nicholas seems indeed to have resided on his new estate,<sup>1721</sup> the protests of Peter Török and his relatives notwithstanding. In 1486 the estate was finally acquired by James Székely of Kövend, then captain of Radkersburg and Pettau, one of the new favourites of king Matthias, and a rival as formidable as Ernuszt had been earlier.<sup>1722</sup> James, and later his brother, Nicholas, although sometimes calling themselves of Dobrakucsa, rarely resided in Slavonia, but insisted on retaining the castle of Dobrakucsa. Both held important posts in the court,<sup>1723</sup> the Nelepeci had consequently no chances of regaining their ancient estate, although this time again Francis son of David protested against the donation.<sup>1724</sup>

1716 See the section on the Mindszenti above.

1717 MNL OL, DF 268 098.

1718 MNL OL, DL 94 527. Many years later Francis Nelepeci remembered that after Ladislav had been captured by Ernuszt, the third brother, Nicholas, was driven by fear to escape and died "extra bona et jura possessionaria sua" (DL 94 831).

1719 MNL OL, DF 231 190.

1720 MNL OL, DL 94 831: "cuidam Bohemo Nicolao Lwsiczky de Czerzwycz contulisset."

1721 MNL OL, DL 35 700: "Friderico Lwsychky de Dobrakwchya;" DL 107 063.

1722 MNL OL, DL 101 026.

1723 See above p. 34 and n. 45.

1724 MNL OL, DL 101 026: protest was made in the name of Francis Nelepeci with regard to the sixth part of all the appurtenances of the castle.

We do not know how the surviving members of the Nelepeci family got along with the Székely brothers and how they managed to save at least a small portion of the estate for themselves. In September 1482 Dominic son of Benedict and his three nephews: Ladislás, David and Nicholas were still mentioned together, and the castle of Dobrakucsá referred to as “theirs”.<sup>1725</sup> From the late 1480s Francis son of David is the only member of the Nelepeci family who turns up regularly in the sources, although the sons of Ladislás: John, Michael and Stephen were also alive. This John was a *famulus* of Francis Beriszló in 1494, but that is all we know about him.<sup>1726</sup> It is consequently Francis Nelepeci whose career can be reconstructed with some details.

The tax register of 1495 does not mention any portion of Dobrakucsá in the hands of the Nelepeci, the whole being listed in the possession of James Székely. In 1507, however, we meet again Francis Nelepeci with a mere 16 tenant plots under the heading of Dobrakucsá.<sup>1727</sup> In 1515 Francis was cited from the possession of Szobocsina, once belonging to the castle of Dobrakucsá, so he must have made an accord with the Székely brothers sometime before 1507.<sup>1728</sup> The tiny portion he finally managed to retain together with his cousins was obviously not enough to serve as a basis for a new social rise, and the clue to the otherwise mysterious career of Francis Nelepeci seems indeed to be looked for elsewhere.

As mentioned above, he married the daughter of Elias Businci, also called “Bosnian”.<sup>1729</sup> The origins and career of Elias have already been analysed, here it will suffice to repeat that at the turn of the century he was *provisor curie* of the castle of Jajce and an ever more influential member of the wealthy Slavonian nobility. In 1506 he was appointed as one of the vicebans of bans Andrew Both and Mark Horváth. He must have seemed powerful enough as an ally to make a try to regain the family castle of Dobrakucsá. In 1502 Francis Nelepeci wanted to sell him the castle with the evident aim of getting help from him against Nicholas Székely.<sup>1730</sup> Although the plan probably failed to work, it was obviously thanks to the influence of Elias Bosnyák that Francis Nelepeci himself was appointed as viceban in 1507. His lord, Andrew Both was removed from his office early in 1508, and Francis lost his position as viceban accordingly, but he does not seem to have followed Both into open rebellion against king Wladislaw II.

1725 MNL OL, DL 100 980.

1726 Engel, *Geschichte*, 95–96.

1727 Adamček–Kampuš, *Popisi*, 11, 30. In 1495 a fraction of the estate is listed in the possession of Michael Ozorai. He married the widow of David Nelepeci, and thus acquired his lands: MNL OL, DF 265 881. Previously he had been castellan and alispán of Verőce: DL 94 264.

1728 In 1515 Francis Nelepeci had tenants in both of the market towns belonging to the castle of Dobrakucsá, Hévíz and Csütörtökhely, and in sixteen villages, most of which can be identified with the appurtenances of the castle enumerated in 1486: MNL OL, DL 94 819.

1729 For the references see above the chapter on Elias Bosnyák.

1730 MNL OL, DF 232 106.

Yet, perhaps counting on the help of his lord, he felt himself strong enough to defy the usurpers of the family castle and reestablish his social position by constructing a new fortification on one of the appurtenances of Dobrakucsa. On 30 December 1507 he dated a letter from Dobrakucsa,<sup>1731</sup> the construction of his *castellum* may therefore by that time have been completed.<sup>1732</sup> Nicholas Székely turned to the king for remedy, and Wladislaw II accordingly ordered the bans of Slavonia, George Kanizsai and John Ernuszt, to proceed to the demolition of the newly erected fortification. The bans were unable or unwilling to act, however, and Székely was consequently forced to urge the king for assistance again. In 1510, after the general assembly of the kingdom had asserted the illegality of Nelepeci's *castellum*, Wladislaw commissioned in the absence of new bans the prior of Vrana and Francis Beriszló as well as the noble community of Slavonia to bring about the destruction of the *castellum* if Francis refused to comply.<sup>1733</sup>

Nothing apparently happened, however, and the relationship between Nelepeci and Székely further deteriorated. Nelepeci confiscated some salt from his adversary, and even dishonoured him at the gathering of the Slavonian nobility at Körös, while Székely was staying at the court of the emperor in his king's business.<sup>1734</sup> Moreover, instead of refraining from continuing the work on his new residence, he surrounded it with a strong stonewall.<sup>1735</sup> His confidence is sufficiently accounted for by the authority of his new lord, Peter Beriszló, ban of Slavonia, whose entourage Francis had joined soon after his appointment as ban.<sup>1736</sup> It was therefore without effect that king Wladislaw ordered again in June 1515 Peter Beriszló himself and the Slavonian nobility to demolish the *castellum* without delay.

Nicholas Székely then had the idea of resorting to more effective means instead of the distant and paralysed royal will. He turned to his most powerful neighbour, duke Lawrence Újlaki, and asked him, in return for rewards that remain unknown to us, to help him settle the affair. But ban Beriszló intervened immediately, and protested against the duke's action with reference to his own exclusive authority in Slavonia and to the liberties of the Slavonian nobility.<sup>1737</sup> The conflict which menaced to erupt between two of his most powerful barons prompted the king to mediate, and in September 1515 he

1731 MNL OL, DL 46 830.

1732 In 1522 the fortification of Francis Nelepeci is said to stand in Kőalja (MNL OL, DL 94 866: "curie nobilitaris sive fortalicii egregii Francisci Nelepeczy de Dobrakuchya in Subkywallya"), and sometimes he is even called of it: "Franciscus Nelepeczy de Subkwalya in pertinenciis Dobrakwchya [...] commorans:" DL 94 865, DL 94 871.

1733 MNL OL, DL 94 736; DL 94 737.

1734 MNL OL, DL 94 802.

1735 MNL OL, DL 94 803: "contra nostram inhibitionem litteratorie factam muro fortissimo castellum huiusmodi edificare velles."

1736 MNL OL, DL 104 635 (1513): "Circa festum Corporis Christi Francisco Nelepeczy servitori eiusdem domini dati sunt in paratis fl. L."

1737 MNL OL, DL 104 278.

only ordered Francis Nelepeci to suspend works on his *castellum* until the Slavonian nobility would testify that each of their members had the right, according to ancient custom, to erect a fortification on his own estates.<sup>1738</sup> The outcome of the dispute is not known; it is certain that the Székely of Kövend remained in possession of the old castle of Dobrakucsa until its occupation by the Ottomans in 1542, but nothing is known about the fate of the new fortification.

As regards Francis Nelepeci, he remained one of the leading *familiares* of ban Beriszló. First his castellan in the Hospitaller castle of Krassó (Karaševo, CRO),<sup>1739</sup> later he was appointed as his captain of Senj.<sup>1740</sup> In 1523 we find him among those leading nobles, together with members of the Batthyány, Tahi, Kasztellánfi, Pekri and Szencsei families, who invited the Slavonian nobility for a congregation to Zdenc.<sup>1741</sup> He also managed to win back juridically the possessions of Kravarina and Gradec, once belonging to the estate of Dobrakucsa, which had been alienated from it by his ancestors.<sup>1742</sup> He died before 5 December 1523.<sup>1743</sup> From his wife, Barbara, he had three sons called Farkas (Wolfgang), John and Stephen. Francis also had at least two sisters, one of whom married Nicholas of Pezerio, a well-to-do nobleman from the county of Zagreb.<sup>1744</sup> The other, Clara, was married to Michael Ajtósi, a nobleman from the county of Békés, and prepared her last will in the house of her brother in 1510.<sup>1745</sup> After the occupation of Dobrakucsa by the Ottomans (1543), John Nelepeci, apparently the only surviving member of his kin, seems to have moved to the portion of his aunt at Pezerio, where he is listed by the subsequent tax lists.<sup>1746</sup>

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1738 MNL OL, DL 94 811: “interea quoad litteras universitatis nobilium regni nostri Sclavonie super eo quod scilicet unusquisque nobilium erigendi huiusmodi castella in bonis suis ex vetusta regni consuetudine liberam habet potestatis facultatem coram nobis prout te ultro obtulisti producere et exhibere poteris.”

1739 MNL OL, DL 104 297.

1740 MNL OL, DL 104 220 (January 9, 1517, wrongly dated by the register of the Hungarian National Archives to 1510).

1741 MNL OL, DF 252 335. Interestingly, in December 1522 he was said to have died, and his son, Farkas, ordered to be cited: DL 94 868.

1742 In 1517 he made an accord with Francis Pan, who presumably inherited these possessions from his father, before the ban. Catherine, the daughter of Barbara, daughter of Michael Ozorai and Perpetua, widow of David Nelepec, was betrothed to Francis Pan, and they were left in possession of half of Kravarina and Gradec, and so was Francis Nelepeci himself, with the provision of mutual inheritance in the case of one of the parties dying heirless. The accord was confirmed by palatine Stephen Bátori, royal lieutenant, in March 1523: MNL OL, DF 265 881.

1743 MNL OL, DL 94 882.

1744 MNL OL, DF 277 175/259–61 *ecw*. The Barbara who is mentioned in this charter as the *soror carnalis* of Francis seems to be identical with the Barbara, daughter of Michael Ozorai.

1745 *Levéltári Közlemények* 7 (1929), 309–11.

1746 Adamček–Kampuš, Popisi, 144, 149. See also Laszowski, *Monumenta Habsburgica*, vol. III, 264.

## 2.2.34. Orrosovc (Orros) (Orros de Orrosowch)

We know nothing about the origins of the Orrosovc<sup>1747</sup> family; judging by the size of their namegiving village, they by no means counted among the poorest nobility, but still their possessions seem originally to have been restricted to a single village. In 1463 a certain Ladislav Orros of Orrosovc is referred to as the *familiaris* of Frank Fáncs and Andrew Alapi,<sup>1748</sup> and the master Nicholas, who made a career in the late fifteenth century which was certainly out of proportion with his family background, was in all probability his son. Indeed, if the latter is identical with the *Nicolaus filius quondam Ladislai de Orossowcz* who turns up in 1482 as a public notary, for some time he was a cleric.<sup>1749</sup> Whatever the case, Nicholas was surely a learned person, as his master title shows, and started out as a lawyer at the banal court.<sup>1750</sup> At the same time he also acted as a royal man,<sup>1751</sup> and it was evidently the respect he had earned as a legal expert that he became involved in the negotiations of the Slavonian nobility with bishop Oswald in the intricate matter of tithe-paying. More exactly, his growing influence was in all likelihood the consequence of the patronage of Ladislav Hermanfi, for whom (and later for his adopted son, Balthasar Batthyány) he acted as a kind of "family attorney".<sup>1752</sup>

Already in 1485 he was member of the committee which elaborated the document upon the method of taxpaying, alongside such figures as Peter Bocskai and Ladislav Hermanfi.<sup>1753</sup> A year later he was again a representative of the Slavonian nobility at Buda,<sup>1754</sup> whereas in 1488 he acted in the same quality, together with Michael Kerhen and George Kapitánfi, at Vienna.<sup>1755</sup> From a later recollection we know that in the same period he also functioned several times as tax collector in Slavonia.<sup>1756</sup> Moreover, he was elected szolgabíró of the county of Körös in 1488 and 1489 and as such he issued charters under his own seal at his residence at Csakovc.<sup>1757</sup> In 1490 we find

1747 In all probability, the name of the village derived from that of the family (Orros) itself.

1748 MNL OL, DF 255 767.

1749 MNL OL, DL 100 980.

1750 MNL OL, DL 107 041; *Levéltári Közlemények* 13 (1935), 245–46, 249.

1751 MNL OL, DL 19 045.

1752 MNL OL, DL 102 223, DL 101 029, DL 101 024, DL 103 922, DL 103 928, DL 106 865.

1753 MNL OL, DF 268 111.

1754 MNL OL, DF 268 110.

1755 MNL OL, DF 268 111.

1756 Thallóczy–Horváth, *Jajcza*, 129: "item pretactus Nicolaus Orros fassus extitisset, quod ipse vivente serenissimo condam domino Matthia rege fuisset pluries dicator comitatus Crisiensis."

1757 MNL OL, DL 103 938, DL 103 961, DL 103 948, DL 103 950 (the latter two issued at Csakovc). DL 107 101 (1494): "ad domum et curiam nobilitarem [...] Nicolai de Orosowcz [...] in possessione sua Chakowcz habitam." In fact, there existed a family called of Csakovc, which cannot be linked to the family of master Nicholas: Adamček–Kampuš, *Popisi*, 67, MNL OL, DF 275 004. This Csakovc, also known as Musinamelléke (Chakowcz aliter Mwsynyamelleky, DL 34 311), is falsely assimilated with the Hospitaller estate of



him again amongst the Slavonian nobility negotiating with bishop Oswald, and in 1492 he was present at Buda and confirmed the Habsburg succession there, although his name turns up fairly down on the list of Slavonian and Croatian nobility, opening, as it seems, the group of lawyers.

After 1492 Nicholas continued to function as a lawyer, frequently in the service of Balthasar Batthyány, but also as a legal expert connected to the banal court.<sup>1758</sup> Later on he also appears formally as a *familiaris* of Balthasar Batthyány,<sup>1759</sup> although it is impossible to tell what the difference was with regard to his previous role as his lawyer. What is well known, on the other hand, is that in 1497 and 1498 he went over to the neighbouring magnate, Nicholas Bánfi, and became his *officialis* at Orbona, and was as such titled *egregius*.<sup>1760</sup> As a proof of his enhanced prestige, he was one of the arbitrators between John Ernuszt and the chapter of Csázma in 1499,<sup>1761</sup> and was designated as the executor of the last will of Nicholas Mikulašić together with his former lord, Balthasar Batthyány.<sup>1762</sup> He remained active as a lawyer until his death sometime after 1503.<sup>1763</sup> Yet neither Gabriel Orros, probably his son, nor Ladislav Orros, who was also his kinsman, inherited either his legal knowledge and consequent authority or his local social prestige. Both turn up as a royal/banal man, but that is all we can know about their respective careers.<sup>1764</sup>

### 2.2.35. Pálfi of Szentmihály (Pálffy de [Obramelcz, Abramowcz] Zenthmyhal)

The origins of the Pálfi family, although it is possible to follow them back into the early fourteenth century, are as obscure as those of the Orros. The possession of Szentmihály itself lay in the neighbourhood of Dobrakucsa, and its earliest known possessor seems to have been a certain Obramich/Obramelch.<sup>1765</sup> Yet it is very probable that this Obramelch was the same

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Csáktornya (Čaklovac) by the editors of Popisi. The Kamarcai also owned portions of Csakovc, and so did in 1517 master Peter Vratissa, prothonotary of Slavonia.

1758 MNL OL, DL 68 716 (1493): “de sede nostra banali ad id specialiter transmissus.”

1759 MNL OL, DL 104 011, DL 104 017.

1760 MNL OL, DL 46 406, DL 107 119, DL 102 277.

1761 MNL OL, DF 282 462. He was, it is true, carefully distinguished together with two other persons, who also held the office of szolgabíró in Körös, with the simple title of nobilis, from the group of egregius lords, three of whom were vicebans.

1762 MNL OL, DL 104 131.

1763 MNL OL, DF 219 118, for Stephen Egervári.

1764 MNL OL, DF 256 033, 274 994. In 1517 Gabriel Orros was registered with altogether 22 tenant plots at Orrosovc, Csakovc, and Povsinc, the latter in the county of Verőce. Adamček–Kampuš, *Popisi*, 101, 104, 112.

1765 MNL OL, DL 35 388: “que vallis separet possessionem Dobrakucha a possessionibus filiorum Obramich.” It later turns up as Obranowc[zentmi]hal (*Zsigmondkori Oklevéltár*,

person as Abraham (Obram-Abraam), son of Isow,<sup>1766</sup> whose sons, Paul and George divided their lands with their cousin Nicholas in 1314; the villages assorted to the former two were *Zwunch*, *Thopolcha* and *Wochoyn*, with a chapel dedicated to Saint Michael, in which it is perhaps reasonable to recognise the future Obramovcszentmihály.<sup>1767</sup> In this case the Alexander son of Paul Szentmihályi who turns up as a designated royal man in 1367<sup>1768</sup> would be the son of Paul, son of Abraham,<sup>1769</sup> and he seems to be identifiable with the Sandrinus whose son Nicholas is mentioned in 1431 together with his possession of Obramechzenthmihal.<sup>1770</sup> This Nicholas, on the other hand, may be the same person as Nicholas Török (Turk) of Obranovcszentmihály, who ten years before tried to obtain portions of the estate of Újudvar.<sup>1771</sup>

Yet it was not from this Nicholas but from Paul, son of George, son of Abraham that the Pálfi of Szentmihály family descended. Paul had two sons, Ladislás and John, about whom we know almost nothing;<sup>1772</sup> they turn up but once as designated royal men with regard to the estate of Verőce.<sup>1773</sup> It was the son of this latter John, called Valentine, who made a career which makes him worth considering here as a member of the noble élite. We first see him in 1472, when it was upon his instigation that Nicholas Pozsegai captivated Nicholas Mindszenti.<sup>1774</sup> From this charter we know that he was literate; moreover, he was then cited from the possession of Erwenyk, which seems to be identical with Rawenyk, in the county of Verőce, which was listed under his name in 1472.<sup>1775</sup> He also had portions at Alsó and Felső Csernec (*Chernecz*), which he donated to the monks of Dobrakucsá.<sup>1776</sup> All in all, he may have had more land in the neighbouring county of Verőce than in Körös, although it is impossible to tell whether it was ancient property or acquired recently. In 1481 he was one of the jurors elected by the assembly of Zagreb for the counties of

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vol. VIII, no. 1289), Obranyinchzenthmihal, Obramelczzenthmyhal and a number of others forms.

1766 Isow (Izsó) is the Hungarian form of the name Esau.

1767 *Anjou-kori Oklevéltár*, vol. III, no. 847. See MNL OL, DL 94 435. The possessions given to Nicholas are one with a church dedicated to the Virgin Mary, presumably Bresztolc, and Kretin (Creytin) and Szaplónca (Sopluncha). In the fourteenth-century list of parishes the two parish churches are referred to as "Ecclesia Beate Virginis in possessione filiorum Ysau. Sancti Michaelis ibidem." Csánki, *Körösmegye*, 79. About this Isow/Ysau, however, we know nothing.

1768 Smičiklas, *Codex diplomaticus*, vol. XIV, 14, Pauli wrongly rendered as Peculi (see MNL OL, DL 33 756).

1769 MNL OL, DL 94 434 (1369): "Georgii Abraee ac Alexandri et Valentini filiorum Pauli filii predicti Abraee nobilium de Zenthmyhal."

1770 MNL OL, DL 104 532.

1771 *Zsigmondkori Oklevéltár*, vol. VIII, no. 1289.

1772 MNL OL, DL 33 488.

1773 MNL OL, DL 33 424.

1774 MNL OL, DF 268 097.

1775 MNL OL, DF 268 097; Adamček-Kampuš, *Popisi*, 43.

1776 *Levéltári Közlemények* 7 (1929): 301–02.

Körös and Verőce,<sup>1777</sup> and thereafter embarked on a legal career which finally made him one of the most frequently employed lawyers even outside Slavonia. In the 1490s he represented practically all the magnates with possessions in Slavonia but also many among the rich nobility both before the ban and in the royal court.<sup>1778</sup> It was evidently due to his legal experience and growing prestige that in 1495 he was elected as one of the arbitrators between George Kasztellánfi and Francis Beriszló.<sup>1779</sup>

Still in the same year he was appointed by the Bátori family as their castellan of Zdenc, and remained in this office until after August 1499, although he was not always mentioned as such.<sup>1780</sup> As castellan of Zdenc he was regularly titled *egregius*,<sup>1781</sup> and the title, at least once, was also given to his son Nicholas.<sup>1782</sup> In 1498 he and his three sons, Nicholas, John and Ladislas, received a coat of arms from king Wladislaw in return for the services performed by Valentine, again titled *egregius*.<sup>1783</sup> Perhaps due to his service of the Bátori family, after 1500 his clientele expanded to comprise families from outside Slavonia, but he continued to represent the local families as well.<sup>1784</sup> As a lawyer he stayed regularly in the capital, and tried to profit from his closeness to the king already before 1494 to get the estate of Garignica, but with no result.<sup>1785</sup> Nor do we know of any later acquisitions of land by him either in Slavonia or outside, which seems to prove, together with the case of Nicholas Orros, that legal expertise and the wide network of relations which went with it were not necessarily enough to provide the means, either fiscal or social, needed to accomplish a durable rise. By 1505 at the latest he had been appointed as alispán of Verőce, and he is attested as such in 1507 as well; this would mean that he went over to the Bánfi of Lendva family, the members of which then held the ispánság of Verőce.<sup>1786</sup>

Valentine Pálfi married the daughter of Peter Csezmicei and Margaret Mikcsec of Cirkvena, who bore him three sons and several daughters. One of

1777 Tringli, "Szlavóniai közgyűlés," 314.

1778 Borsa, *Justh család levéltára*, no. 320, MNL OL, DL 102 223, DF 219 008, DL 101 029, DL 101 064, DL 103 928, DL 107 077, DL 101 078, DL 37 675, DF 233 345, DF 231 848, DF 231 867, DF 231 924, DL 37 662.

1779 *Levéltári Közlemények* 7 (1929): 301–02.

1780 First mentioned as such in December 1495: MNL OL, DL 106 875. August 1499: DL 46 534.

1781 MNL OL, DL 104 047, DL 46 386.

1782 MNL OL, DF 232 021.

1783 MNL OL, DF 286 308.

1784 MNL OL, DF 233 481, DL 20 852, DL 64 510, DL 75 735, DL 75 680, DL 37 709, Borsa, *Balassa család levéltára*, no. 486.

1785 MNL OL, DL 107 100.

1786 MNL OL, DL 94 305, DL 101 388. We have only two charters issued by the authorities of Verőce county between 1498 and 1512. It is worth remarking that, unlike their predecessors and successors in the office of alispán, Valentine Pálfi and Bernard Ördög of Vragovc, who figures in 1512 (DL 33 906), are not simultaneously titled as castellans of Verőce.

the latter, Veronica, became the husband of Francis Raveni,<sup>1787</sup> and another probably that of Bernard Megyericsei.<sup>1788</sup> The son of Valentine, John, turns up once as a royal man,<sup>1789</sup> and had himself three sons from his wife,<sup>1790</sup> but neither he nor his sons seem to have been able to build up a career comparable to that of Valentine either before or after Mohács.

### 2.2.36. Pataki (de Pathak)

The family of Albert Pataki (Potok Kalnički, CRO), son of Martin, belonged to the castle nobility of Kemlék.<sup>1791</sup> His father already was a literate, as his master title shows.<sup>1792</sup> It is very probable that the Ladislav Pataki who is mentioned as captain of Kemlék (in the service of the counts of Cilli) in 1445 also belonged to his kin, although it is impossible to tell what role he played in the career of Albert.<sup>1793</sup> The latter merely occurs in the sources as designated royal man before he became prothonotary of the seat of Körös, presumably in the early 1450s.<sup>1794</sup> His family, however, belonged to the élite within the castle nobility of Kemlék, if the fact that noblemen called Pataki were among those who represented their fellow nobles before the ban and the king respectively in 1448 and 1472, when they were menaced by subjection to seigniorial domination, can be judged as an indication of such preeminence.<sup>1795</sup> Then, somewhat unexpectedly, Albert emerges as ispán of the Cumans in 1456.<sup>1796</sup> The palatine, who normally bore this title, was Ladislav Garai then, but it is

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1787 MNL OL, DF 232 021.

1788 See the chapter on the Megyericsei above.

1789 MNL OL, DF 274 915.

1790 MNL OL, DF 277 175/313–15 ecw.

1791 MNL OL, DL 102 112: "Albertus et Johannes filii Martini [...] de Patak [...] nobiles [...] castri Maioris Kemlek;" DF 231254: "Alberto Pathak, Nicolao de eadem [...] necnon aliis quampluribus nobilibus de Maiori Kemlek."

1792 Lukinović, *Povijesni spomenici*, vol. VI, 7: "magistrum Martinum filium Mathei de Pathak."

1793 Engel, *Archontológia*, vol. I, 372. I know of no other noble family known as of Patak, either in Slavonia or in Hungary proper. One branch of the Perényi family had been called Pataki as well, but it died out earlier.

1794 MNL OL, DF 275 152, DF 275 034 (royal man); DL 104 197: "magister Albertus de Pathak alias sedis Crisiensis prothonotarius." This charter, issued in 1458, was put to 1508 by Bónis (*Jogtudó értelmiség*, 374), and the name misread as Pathas.

1795 MNL OL, DF 231 254, DF 233 345.

1796 MNL OL, DF 283 739: "fidelis noster egregius Albertus filius quondam Martini litterati de Wyncarz comes Comanorum nostrorum." He petitions the transcription of a charter which was issued two years earlier by ban Ulrich of Cilli "in causa inter Albertum et Johannem filios quondam Martini litterati de Wyncarz ut actores ab una, et inter Stephanum litteratum filium Georgii de prefata Wyncarz alias de Winichno uti in causam attractum ab alia partibus super facto possessionis Wyncarz," which makes it evident that this Albert is identical with Albert Pataki.

evident that it was count Ulrich of Cilli who stood behind this appointment. His “quasi-baronial” career proved short-lived, however, and he soon returned to Slavonia. After the death of count Ulrich he joined John Vitovec, and seems to have belonged to the “judicial team” of the ban, among whose *familiares* he was granted pardon in 1463.<sup>1797</sup> In the 1460s he turns up both as designated royal man and as an arbitrator,<sup>1798</sup> whereas in the 1470s he was in two cases listed among the representatives of the Slavonian nobility. In 1472 it was upon the instigation of master Albert and Stephen Bicskele that ban Blaise Magyar extorted the royal tax from a possession of the chapter of Zagreb in the county of Varasd despite their exemption, but we do not know by what right he was involved in the case.<sup>1799</sup> What is sure is that in the 1470s not only Albert himself but also his sons were accorded the *egregius* title.<sup>1800</sup> In 1471 he petitioned some of the Cirkvenai lands from king Matthias, perhaps a sign of his access to the royal favour. His sons, George and Nicholas, certainly possessed at Palicsnaszentpéter, which lay at a considerable distance from Kemlék.<sup>1801</sup>

In 1480 he reappears as prothonotary of the county of Varasd.<sup>1802</sup> A year later already his widow Barbara was proscribed as the concubine of her stepson. At the same congregation a certain George Pataki was also put on the list of culprits as a person in charge of some border castles, who had engaged in illegal traffic with weapons there.<sup>1803</sup> We do not know whether this George belonged to the same kin, yet it is very probable, for no other family with the same name is known from the county of Körös. He may be identical with the George Pataki who turns up as a royal man in 1464 and 1476, which would mean that another member of the family equally entered the royal service.<sup>1804</sup> A further, albeit vague, indication in this direction is the fact that after the death of Peter Bikszádi it was in the company of the counts of Zagorje, ban Ladislav Egervári and George Turóci, all linked to the court, that George Pataki petitioned for the estates of Bikszád and Szentpéter from the king.<sup>1805</sup>

1797 In 1459 he was one of those legal experts whom ban Vitovec sent out to judge a case, involving the burghers of Varasd, together with the authorities of Varasd county: MNL OL, DL 103 664. He also acted as an attorney at the banal seat: DL 103 654, DL 103 720. Royal pardon: DF 233 405, and again in 1468: DF 233 308.

1798 *Levéltári Közlemények* 8 (1930): 95 (royal man); MNL OL, DL 101 757, DL 16 793 (arbitrator, in both cases in the company of leading Slavonian noblemen).

1799 MNL OL, DF 256 708.

1800 MNL OL, DF 279 541, DF 276 827.

1801 MNL OL, DL 33 135.

1802 MNL OL, DF 218 983.

1803 Tringli, “Szlavóniai közgyűlés,” 315, 316: “condam Georgium Pathaky alias castra regie maiestatis finitiva tenentem.”

1804 MNL OL, DF 255 582, DF 275 135. See also DF 233 345. He could of course be identified with the son of master Albert, but since he apparently belonged to the same generation as Albert, the hypothesis seemed too weak to be adopted.

1805 MNL OL, DF 231 678.

Unfortunately, no other source refers to George Pataki as a royal castellan, it is consequently impossible to determine which royal castles were entrusted to him and when. We do know, however, that another kinsman of Albert Pataki, namely the son of his daughter, called Peter, was deputy castellan at Rakonok in the service of Sigismund Frodnacher in 1518.<sup>1806</sup> With his exception, neither the sons of Albert Pataki, nor his nephew, Martin, who turns up as a designated royal man,<sup>1807</sup> seem to have inherited the local yet considerable influence of master Albert. As a matter of fact, in 1489 Nicholas Pataki was involved in the collection of the Slavonian tax, apparently in the service of the non-Slavonian Nicholas Verebélyi,<sup>1808</sup> but he disappears from our sources thereafter.<sup>1809</sup> The grandsons of master Albert, Francis and Nicholas appear in 1525 for the last time, as simple *nobiles* owning the possession of *Marthynych*.<sup>1810</sup>

### 2.2.37. Pekri

The Pekri family boasted one of the most illustrious origins among the Slavonian nobility. Until the end of the fourteenth century it was also one of the richest, and Bálint Hóman even put them on the top of the Hungarian aristocracy at the end of the Angevin period.<sup>1811</sup> Although Hóman's classification of the nobility was convincingly refuted by Pál Engel,<sup>1812</sup> it remains a fact that the Tétény kindred, which seems to have settled originally in Hungary proper, owned a wide stretch of lands in the southern half of the county of Körös along the Peker river and in the eastern corner of the same county. The social standing of the kindred was proportionate to its landed wealth: Peter, the ancestor of the Pekri family, was ban of Slavonia in 1281–1283.<sup>1813</sup> The son of Peter, Lawrence married from the even more illustrious Aba kindred; his two sons, Peter and Paul established the two branches of the

1806 The son of Dorothy, sister of master Albert: MNL OL, DF 279 542. Deputy castellan, himself literate: DF 252 288.

1807 MNL OL, DF 261 907, DF 255 533.

1808 MNL OL, DL 108 319.

1809 In 1518 we see a Nicholas Pataki, canon of Csázma. His identification with the son of master Albert is not beyond doubt, however. MNL OL, DF 209 454.

1810 MNL OL, DF 277 175/481–83 ecw.

1811 Bálint Hóman and Gyula Szekfű, *Magyar Történet* [History of Hungary], vol. II (Budapest: n.p., 1936), 270.

1812 Engel, "Magyar világi nagybirtok," 58, n. 41.

1813 On the early history and the lands of the kindred see Karácsonyi, *Magyar nemzetségek*, 1003–07. In the late middle ages such important estates shared the territory of the original Tétény lands as those of Vasmegyericse, Garignica, Dobrakucs and Aszúágy. The overall size of the lands which had originally belonged to the Tétény kindred can be put to some 1600 inhabited tenant plots at the end of the middle ages.



Pekri family.<sup>1814</sup> The son of Paul, Nicholas entered again the tiny group of barons under Louis I when he was appointed as master of the cupbearers to the queen.<sup>1815</sup> Both he and his brother Stephen married from the Bánca kindred, to which the notorious Horváti brothers belonged. This alliance appears to have sealed the fate of the entire Pekri family and put a definitive end to their baronial ambitions.

Although we know nothing about their eventual involvement in the revolt of the Horváti brothers, and, moreover, Nicholas Pekri was present at the assembly of Pressburg in 1402,<sup>1816</sup> a year later king Sigismund confiscated all their lands because they were “guilty of transferring Ladislás, son of Charles to the city of Zara, of having him crowned with a false crown and of taking part in the subsequent devastations”. They were even said to have killed their own kinsman, master Nicholas, Stephen’s son from his previous marriage, who had remained faithful to king Sigismund. Whatever the truth, they were among those few who really lost their property. The severe punishment struck both branches of the family: the three sons of Demetrius: Nicholas, John and Benedict, Paul son of Nicholas, and the two sons of Stephen son of Paul: John and Ladislás. In the branch of Peter the son of Demetrius, Lawrence and his sons were left unmentioned, and so was Nicholas son of Nicholas in the branch of Paul.<sup>1817</sup> The son of Demetrius, Nicholas, who in 1403 was the *familiaris* of Ladislás Újlaki, had managed to obtain a letter of grace before the rebellion was finally suppressed,<sup>1818</sup> but the new owner of the Pekri lands, John Maróti, ban of Macsó, proved insurmountable and Nicholas was again declared guilty of infidelity in 1405.<sup>1819</sup> In the other branch of the family the sons of Stephen: Ladislás and John were granted pardon at the congregation of Körös (in 1403), where the noble jurors asserted that at the time of rebellion both they and their mother had stayed in the castle of Siklós with the wife of the late palatine Nicholas Garai and had consequently remained immune of any act of infidelity.<sup>1820</sup>

Henceforth the descendants of Paul seem to have resided on their remaining estates around Garignica, whereas those of Peter settled along the river Peker on the possession which was accordingly called Petrovina. As can be judged from later evidence, both remaining portions were of a considerable size, yet not great enough to allow a new social rise during the more peaceful second half of the rule of king Sigismund. The son of Nicholas, Ladislás,

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1814 MNL OL, DL 33 495: “quondam Paulus, a quo possessiones ille Paulowyna nominantur tenuit illam partem possessionis et eam habuit per modum divisionis, ita quod possessiones que Petrowyna dicuntur cesserant alteri fratri videlicet Petro.”

1815 Engel, *Archontológia*, vol. I, 58.

1816 Lóvei, “1402. évi oklevél,” 168.

1817 *Zsigmondkori Oklevéltár*, vol. II/1, no. 2905.

1818 *Ibid.*, vol. II/1, no. 2647.

1819 *Ibid.*, vol. II/1, no. 3697.

1820 *Ibid.*, vol. IV, no. 2700.

finally managed to find a *modus vivendi* with his powerful neighbour, John Maróti, for in 1420 some charters concerning the old Pekri estates were confirmed by the king with reference to their common services.<sup>1821</sup> He also held the *castellum* of Mogor and some of its appurtenances in pledge until 1427.<sup>1822</sup> His uncle, Paul, was likewise able to take some lands from Peter Kasztellánfi into pledge.<sup>1823</sup> In the other branch Frank son of Nicholas somehow made his way into the queen's court, and his services were rewarded by king Albert in 1439 with the grant of the estate of Tah in Pilis county.<sup>1824</sup> Yet these services, which must have seemed the start of a new and more promising future for Frank and his brothers, turned out instead to be almost disastrous to the remaining possessions of the whole family.

In the ensuing civil war Frank evidently took sides with queen Elizabeth; it is no wonder, then, that his estates were confiscated anew by king Wladislaw with reference to his acts of infidelity in the time of the late king Sigismund but also to those he was said to have committed recently in the service of ban Ladislás Garai.<sup>1825</sup> Henceforth Frank had no option but to remain faithful to young king Ladislás V, and his relatives among the descendants of Paul almost shared his fate unwillingly. Ladislás Maróti, the son of the late ban John, was one of the chief supporters of Wladislaw I, and, evidently in knowledge of the role that Frank played in the entourage of the queen, petitioned from the king the remaining estates of Ladislás son of Nicholas, to be confiscated for infidelity.<sup>1826</sup> This time the Slavonian nobility collectively intervened on behalf of Ladislás with Wladislaw,<sup>1827</sup> and he was also able to secure the support of another influential baron, Emeric Marcali.<sup>1828</sup> At the same time Ladislás, the son of John in the other branch was also taken into special royal protection.<sup>1829</sup> In 1444 an accord was again made with Maróti, who returned at least some of the possessions he had previously taken,<sup>1830</sup> but the decline of the family

1821 Ibid., vol. VII, no. 2055.

1822 MNL OL, DL 100 453.

1823 *Zsigmondkori oklevéltár*, vol. XI, no. 165.

1824 MNL OL, DL 13 301, with reference to services done "serenissime principi domine Elizabeth regine [...] ab eiusdem infancie tempore."

1825 MNL OL, DL 13 613 (March 29, 1441): "diversis nostris rebellibus qui regnum hoc crudeliter igne et preda vastabant adherendo et cum eis procedendo partemque eorum signanter Ladislai de Gara bani predicti fovendo." On 6 April 1443 he is still staying at Wiener Neustadt as a partisan of young Ladislás V: DF 241 898.

1826 Maróti must surely have applied for the neighbouring estate already before the war, for the Pekri had to protest in 1439: MNL OL, DL 103 592.

1827 MNL OL, DL 103 594.

1828 MNL OL, DL 102 092: the petition of Emeric Marcali from his camp along the river Sava to king Wladislaw to restore the possessions of Ladislás Pekri.

1829 MNL OL, DL 44 315 (June 29, 1441): "fideles nostros egregium Ladislaum filium Johannis de Pwkur alias de Garygnycha, item (...) Ladislaum filium Jose de Cristhalowcz puerum orphanum uti nobis dicitur in etate constitutum tenera et puerili [...] simulcum universis possessionibus, hereditatibus porcionibusque et juribus possessionariis."

1830 MNL OL, DF 257 506. See Csánki, *Körösmegye*, 41.

seemed almost irreversible nevertheless. After 1450 in the branch of Peter only the sons of Lawrence and their offspring remained alive, whereas in that of Paul only Ladislás and his descendants can be followed with some detail; since no practical cooperation between the two branches can be detected, I will accordingly treat them separately.

The fate of the branch descended from Paul was apparently determined by the consecutive marriages of Susan, Ladislás's daughter, despite the fact that she had two brothers as well. She first married Martin Goricaí, whose origins are unknown.<sup>1831</sup> The following events may perhaps be explained by a series of especially violent assaults that Ladislás Pekri and his family suffered in the first months of 1446. In the course of these not only his house was robbed and burned and the building material put together for the construction of his *castellum* taken away, but also his wife and daughters humiliated ruthlessly in the midst of winter rigour.<sup>1832</sup> For this reason or another, in May 1447 Ladislás pledged his portions in Garignica, in the name of his son Nicholas as well, to his own daughter Susan and her husband Martin Goricaí.<sup>1833</sup> This act became the source of long years of conflict and litigation and led on the final account to the estate of Garignica being lost for the Pekri family. Ladislás's other son, John, who was left unmentioned by the accord, occupied forcefully some of its appurtenances two years later,<sup>1834</sup> whereas Martin Goricaí, who had no hope of having offspring from his wife, gave his portions to his two sisters, Clara and Margaret.<sup>1835</sup> Their husbands, Matthias Kustyer and Peter Konszkai, accordingly laid claim to Garignica as well. Yet in the face of the common danger the two sons of Ladislás Pekri, Nicholas and John united, and in 1452 they sold half of their portion in the estate for 3000 florins to Simon Nagy of Szentmárton and his sons.<sup>1836</sup> Simon was governor John Hunyadi's man in the region, and the affair soon assumed a political importance. For, after the death of Martin Goricaí, Susan Pekri married Christoph Paschingar, one of the leading *familiares* of count Ulrich of Cilli, ban of Slavonia. Christoph was granted by king Ladislás V the license to construct a wooden *castellum* on the possession of Garignica, and the fortification was erected by 1456 at the latest. In the late spring of this year Simon Nagy attacked with his accomplices the *castellum* of Garignica and occupied it for himself. Among those who are said to have incited him we find the widow of John Pekri, Anne, and her new husband, Oswald Fejér of Kosztolány, (previously) castellan of Pozsegavár (Požega, CRO). John Vitovec, the mercenary captain of the counts of Cilli and their viceban recaptured immediately the castle and

1831 See above on page 160.

1832 MNL OL, DL 103 608.

1833 MNL OL, DL 103 610.

1834 MNL OL, DL 102 110: "centum minus una sessiones jobagionales populosas videlicet et quasdam ex eisdem desertas in possessione ipsorum Garignicha vocata et suis pertinenciis."

1835 MNL OL, DL 103 633.

1836 MNL OL, DL 103 626.

restored it to Paschingar and his wife.<sup>1837</sup> In April 1458 Oswald Fejér, stepfather of Nicholas Pekri junior made an accord with Paschingar and his wife, halving the appurtenances of Garignica between each other; they also agreed that they would commonly defend their rights against any attempt made by Matthias Kustyer and Peter Konzskai to make good their claims to Garignica.<sup>1838</sup>

In 1463 Susan Pekri and her husband were forced to pledge one third of the estate of Garignica to Matthias Kustyer in exchange for the 425 florins which the latter had once provided for Martin Goricaí to redeem Susan's portion and she proved unable to repay.<sup>1839</sup> Moreover, Oswald Fejér and his stepson, Nicholas Pekri, instead of respecting the compromise of 1458, called back the *familiars* of Simon Nagy, then castellan of Fejérkő, to Garignica, and provoked an incident in retaliation of which Paschingar was seriously punished by the ban and died soon afterwards.<sup>1840</sup> After his death his widow began to alienate the appurtenances of her portion at Garignica to the detriment of her own children and of Nicholas Pekri.<sup>1841</sup> She soon remarried herself, however, with a man called John of Zelnycza/Zelancza. We do not know where he came from, but his social position is fairly well indicated by the fact that once he is attested as the *familiaris* of Peter Jakószerdahelyi.<sup>1842</sup> He was evidently not influential enough to safeguard the interests of Susan, especially after the death of Nicholas son of John, when not only her kinsmen from the branch of Peter reappeared with their claims,<sup>1843</sup> but also powerful lords such as the Maróti brothers and Nicholas Csupor petitioned his inheritance from the king.<sup>1844</sup> It was thus with good reason that in February 1468 she pledged her total remaining portion, that is, thirty tenant plots to Matthias Kustyer.<sup>1845</sup>

Susan Pekri had four surviving children from her marriage with Christoph Paschingar: the two sons, John and Christopher, do not seem to have played any role of importance in the devolution of the Pekri estates, unlike the two daughters, Helen and Dorothy. Helen first became the wife of Nicholas Pozsegai, a *familiaris* of ban John Eruszt, who finally managed to reunite the appurtenances of Garignica in his own hands.<sup>1846</sup> After the death of her first husband Helen married Andrew Kapitánfi of Desnice, who made efforts to occupy the important estate for himself, but proved impotent in the

1837 On the whole affair see Pálosfalvi, "Vitovec János," 436–39.

1838 MNL OL, DL 107 001.

1839 MNL OL, DL 103 668.

1840 MNL OL, DL 103 671. On Christoph Paschingar see below.

1841 MNL OL, DL 103 675.

1842 MNL OL, DL 102 203: "Johannes de Zelancza eotunc familiaris quondam Petri filii Blasii de Jakószerdahel maritus vero nobilis domine Suska vocate filie quondam Ladislai de Peker." Later he also appears as John Garignicaí: DL 106 999.

1843 MNL OL, DL 103 716.

1844 MNL OL, DL 103 693.

1845 MNL OL, DL 45 278.

1846 See below the chapter on Nicholas Pozsegai.

face of the royal will and paid with the loss of his own inherited lands for his obstination.<sup>1847</sup> Yet Helen did not give up her hopes of regaining at least some of her paternal inheritance, and married herself for a third time with John Csezmicsei. Shortly before her death Helen handed over the charters concerning Garignica to her husband and his friend, Valentine Pálfi of Szentmihály, asking them to give them to her sister, Dorothy, wife of Michael Orehovci.<sup>1848</sup> But instead of carrying out Helen's last will, John and Valentine kept the documents, and Valentine even tried with their help to obtain the estate of Garignica officially from the king.<sup>1849</sup> His efforts apparently proved futile, for Garignica remained in the possession of the Batthyány family from 1491 until its occupation by the Ottomans.

Due to the unequal repartition of the sources, much less is known about the fate of the branch which descended from Peter. It seems that all members of the Pekri family occurring in the sources from the late 1460s descended from Lawrence son of Demetrius. The starting position after the calamities which had afflicted the family in 1403 and in the early 1440s may not have been very promising; as a sure sign of their misery in 1442 we find Lawrence, son of Lawrence among the *familiares* of John Szencsei.<sup>1850</sup> It should nevertheless be remarked that even the remaining possessions of the family were of considerable size, for in 1495 220 inhabited tenant plots were registered at Petrovina.<sup>1851</sup> After 1442 we have no information whatsoever for more than two decades, during which Lawrence and his sons completely disappear from our sources. The next time we hear of them is in 1469, when, after the death of Nicholas son of John, Oswald Fejér introduced the two cousins, Nicholas son of Michael (of Pekar) and Nicholas son of Lawrence (of Petrovina) into the portions of their deceased kinsman in Garignica.<sup>1852</sup>

In 1474 Nicholas and Francis Pekri, in 1478 Nicholas son of Michael and Nicholas son of Lawrence were listed among the representatives of the Slavonian nobility, whereas in 1490 it is Francis again who represented his kin among the local noble community. One of the two Nicholas was elected noble juror in the county of Körös at the assembly held by king Matthias early in 1481 at Zagreb.<sup>1853</sup> In 1486, after the castle of Vasmegyericsé and its estate had come into the hands of the Paksi family, Stephen, Nicholas and Ladislás, the sons of Nicholas son of Lawrence, made an effort to regain their ancient

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1847 See above the section on the Kapitánfi family.

1848 In the county of Körös, see Adamček–Kampuš, *Popisi*, 9.

1849 MNL OL, DL 107 100: "per huiusmodi indebitam retencionem ipsarum litterarum et litteralium instrumentorum fraude concepta annotatam possessionem Garignicza cum suis pertinenciis per regiam maiestatem sibi dari et conferri procurasset pretendens easdem possessiones sibi ipsi posse appropriare."

1850 MNL OL, DF 255 717.

1851 In the hands of Francis, Louis and Stephen Pekri: Adamček–Kampuš, *Popisi*, 9–10.

1852 MNL OL, DL 103 716.

1853 Tringli, "Szlavóniai közgyűlés," 314.

property from its new owners, who seemed less formidable than the Drágfi had been before, but to no avail.<sup>1854</sup> It is probable, however, that by the early 1490s some kind of fortification had been erected on their possession of Petrovina.<sup>1855</sup> It is nevertheless remarkable that in March 1492 Francis was a mere 37th among the Croatian and Slavonian nobility, and in January 1493, when an inquisition involving many of the local nobility was carried out at the seat of Körös, the same Francis was titled simply *nobilis*, whereas his peers among the Bocskai, Kasztellánfi, Kapitánfi and Gorbonoki families were all accorded the *egregius* title.<sup>1856</sup> It is probable, however, that in 1500 Ladislás was performing some kind of royal service, for then he committed a violent trespass “with the men and mercenaries of the lord king”, perhaps with those garrisoned at Jajce. But that may already have been a consequence of the career of his brother, Louis.<sup>1857</sup>

It was, apparently, almost as unexpected as a lightning from a cloudless summer sky that Louis Pekri, the great figure of the family’s late medieval history, and founder of their post-Mohács career, was appointed by bans John Both of Bajna and Emeric Derencsényi as one of their vicebans in August 1493. Curiously enough, nothing is known about his preceding career. It is in 1485 that he turns up first together with his brother Ladislás,<sup>1858</sup> and in 1493 he is referred to as the *carnalis* brother of the same Ladislás.<sup>1859</sup> In 1486, however, he is not listed among the sons of Nicholas son of Lawrence. He must evidently have been of age in 1486 to become viceban only seven years later, so he was perhaps born from another mother than the other three boys. Whatever the case, he proved trustworthy enough to remain in office under the next ban, Ladislás Kanizsai as well. In 1496 all the lands of Stephen, Ladislás and Louis Pekri, together with those of George and Nicholas Kasztellánfi, were donated by Wladislaw II to judge royal Peter Geréb, with the pretext that they had attacked with their followers the king’s man sent to Slavonia to collect the royal tax there.<sup>1860</sup> Then he disappears for some years from the sources, and emerges again in 1499, when we learn that his possessions (and those of his brothers) were still occupied by the king. Whether it was the consequence of their infidelity of three years before, or it was somehow connected to the

1854 MNL OL, DL 33 595; DL 34 238.

1855 In 1493 a castellan called Barnaby (*Barnaba castellano*) is mentioned among the people of Petrovina (MNL OL, DF 271 779). The fortification is first mentioned in 1523 under the name of Kalinovc, and surely stood at Petrovina: “castellum Kalynowcz vocatum ac totales porciones possessionarias in possessionibus Pethrowyna ac Blagay vocatis ac cunctas pertinencias ad idem castellum spectantes” (DF 277 175/183–85 ecw).

1856 MNL OL, DF 233 293.

1857 MNL OL, DL 34 148: “assumptis sibi ipsi quampluribus gentibus et stipendiariis regie maiestatis.”

1858 MNL OL, DL 46 001: “Ladislai et Lodovici filiorum quondam Nicolai Lewrinczfy de Pekar.”

1859 MNL OL, DF 271 779.

1860 MNL OL, DL 20 495.



revolt of duke John Corvin, is impossible to decide,<sup>1861</sup> eventually all their lands were restored to them. Moreover, Louis contracted a marriage which proved both politically and economically advantageous: he married the daughter of Peter Bocskai, Elisabeth.<sup>1862</sup> We do not know when this marriage took place, but if it was before 1493, it would sufficiently account for his appointment as viceban. In 1504 he already kept a castellan in the *castellum* of Raszinya,<sup>1863</sup> and in 1507 half of its appurtenances were in his hands;<sup>1864</sup> moreover, Louis also helped himself to the estate of Kustyerolc and the *castellum* there.<sup>1865</sup>

In 1503 he was castellan in the castle of Marót (Morović, Valkó county, today SRB), evidently in the service of duke John Corvin.<sup>1866</sup> After the latter's death, in any case before 1506, he rejoined the Kanizsai family and became their castellan in the castle of Sztenicsnyak in the county of Zagreb.<sup>1867</sup> When Andrew Both of Bajna, the brother of the late John Both, was appointed in his turn as ban of Slavonia, he naturally found the viceban of his late brother, thus launching the most adventurous part of the life of Louis Pekri. The latter was "officially" viceban during 1507, but remained faithful to his lord even after he had been removed from office and openly opposed the royal government. Andrew Both, who continued to regard and title himself as ban after his dismissal, titled as a matter of fact Louis Pekri as his viceban. The latter assisted his lord in collecting the tax of Slavonia for him, and gradually became a kind of deputy-in-chief, especially when Both became ill. In December 1509 he operated with two hundred cavalry south of the river Sava, and mutilated the peasants who dared to oppose. He also acted as a mediator between the deposed ban and the Slavonian nobility. Moreover, sometime before September 1511 he returned with Elias Bosnyák as regular vicebans of Slavonia for a very short period. No wonder, then, that after the death of Andrew Both in September 1511, as a leading *familiaris* of the late ban and the captain of his troops he played a key role in reestablishing the order in Slavonia. In September 1512 he was left in charge of the crucially important castle of Bihać in Croatia until the situation of the ban's widow was arranged and his own salary paid.<sup>1868</sup>

He also continued the expansion of his possessions in Slavonia. It was not only as the son-in-law of Peter Bocskai that he obtained portions of the Bocskai

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1861 See below the section on the Szencsei.

1862 Eg. MNL OL, DF 276 909.

1863 MNL OL, DF 256 008.

1864 In 1507 100 tenant sessions were registered in his hands, 61 and 45 being owned by Francis Kecer and Stephen Bocskai respectively. Adamček–Kampuš, *Popisi*, 27.

1865 Ibid., 51.

1866 MNL OL, DF 276 738: "Lodovico Pekry castellano illustris domini Johannis ducis Corvini in castro suo Maroth."

1867 MNL OL, DL 26 120.

1868 On all this see Pálosfalvi, "Bajnai Both," *passim*.

lands. Another daughter of Peter, Martha, married Francis Szencsei, to whom she bore a son called Farkas (*Bolffangus*). Among the executors of her testament she named her brother-in-law, Louis Pekri,<sup>1869</sup> who was presumably not late in occupying the possessions of Farkas, among the them the *castellum* of Szentlőrinc, as the boy's "tutor and protector".<sup>1870</sup> He seems to have been equally fortunate in finding consorts for his children. As we have seen, one of his sons, John married the only daughter of Stephen Gudovci and thus inherited the possessions amassed by master Peter Gudovci.<sup>1871</sup> One of the daughters, Helen married John Predrihoi, the brother of viceban Marcinko, who, in the absence of male relatives, designated as heir to his castle of Oszterc (Oštrc, CRO) and its appurtenances Louis Pekri and his sons.<sup>1872</sup> Another daughter became the husband of Christopher Megyericsei.<sup>1873</sup> His son, Louis Pekri acquired portions in the estate of Szentlélek by the right of his grandmother, Margaret Kasztellánfi,<sup>1874</sup> and his brother John also vindicated the portions there of George Batthyány, presumably by the same right.<sup>1875</sup> Holder of one castle and three or even four *castella*, Louis Pekri senior was one of the richest nobles of Slavonia at the time of his death sometime during 1516, even though he had to be constantly on the alert for the defense of the inheritance of his wife.

Among the sons of Louis senior, the eldest, John followed in the footsteps of his father and became castellan of Szenticsnyak in the service of Ladislas Kanizsai.<sup>1876</sup> In 1525, however, he is already attested, together with his brother Nicholas, in the service of ban John Tahi.<sup>1877</sup> As for Louis junior, he joined the court of Louis II as a *familiaris*, then became captain of Slavonia in 1525.<sup>1878</sup> After 1526 his career rose meteorically, his long service for Ferdinand I in and outside Slavonia resulting not only in baronial appointments (ban of Slavonia, then master of the table) but also in an aristocratic marriage with the widow

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1869 MNL OL, DL 94 317.

1870 MNL OL, DF 255 568: "Lodovicum de Pekar tutorem eiusdem castelli et bonorum Wolffangi filii quondam domine Marthe;" DF 262 164: "egregiorum Wolfgangi filii quondam domine Marthe filie olim Petri Bochkay de Razyna sive de Zenthlyerncz et Lodovii de Pekar tanquam tutoris et defensoris eiusdem Wolfgangi."

1871 MNL OL, DL 25 625, DL 24 107, DF 277 175/35–37 ecw.

1872 MNL OL, DF 232 371.

1873 See above the note 1628.

1874 MNL OL, DF 232 597, DF 261 910.

1875 MNL OL, DL 65 656.

1876 MNL OL, DL 25 685.

1877 MNL OL, DF 277 175/441 ecw.

1878 Fraknói, "II. Lajos számadási könyve," 163.

of palatine Stephen Bátori.<sup>1879</sup> The two youngest, Farkas and Sigismund, enumerated in 1513, apparently came to adulthood only after 1526.<sup>1880</sup>

All we know about Stephen, (half)-brother of Louis the elder and Ladislas, is that he married from the distant county of Nyitra. The daughter of Sigismund Sóki, called Margaret, is first mentioned as the wife of Stephen Pekri in 1505;<sup>1881</sup> he does not seem to have moved to the estates of his consort, however, for in the 1510s he was occupied in the defence of the Bosnian castles in the service of ban Peter Beriszló.<sup>1882</sup> He died before 1520 and left only four daughters. His widow made some efforts to get a share for them in the Slavonian Pekri estates, but to no avail.<sup>1883</sup>

We are in a much more difficult situation as regards the descendants of Michael son of Lawrence, and it is aggravated by a problem of identification. For not only Nicholas, son of Lawrence but also Nicholas, son of Michael had a son called Stephen, between whom it is difficult to make a distinction. According to the sequence of names, it seems to have been Stephen son of Nicholas, son of Michael, who had in 1492 for wife a woman called Hedwig, who was the daughter of Nicholas Bizerei, a wealthy nobleman from the county of Temes.<sup>1884</sup> This marriage hints at a service outside Slavonia, yet we do not know how he got there. This Stephen had a son called Michael,<sup>1885</sup> who claimed the market town of Rékas (Recaș, RO), in the county of Temes, by right of inheritance,<sup>1886</sup> and was on one occasion even called of it.<sup>1887</sup> Michael married Sarah Csornai, from another local noble family, from whom his son called Gabriel was born.<sup>1888</sup> This Gabriel was very probably the ancestor of that branch of the family which flourished in Transylvania after Mohács.<sup>1889</sup> Michael died before 1523, when his widow prohibited that of the other Stephen from petitioning the Pekri estates in Körös. As for Francis, uncle of Stephen, the only thing we know about him after 1493 is that his wife was

1879 His post-Mohács career needs to be reconstructed in detail. See, however, Szabolcs Varga, "A Bátoriak Szlavóniában" [The Bátori Family in Slavonia], in *Az ecsedi Báthoriak a XV–XVII. században* [The Báthori of Ecsed in the Fourteenth to Seventeenth Centuries], ed. Sarolta Szabó and Norbert C. Tóth (Nyírbátor: Báthori István Múzeum, 2012), 157–58; MNL OL, Libri regii, vol. 1, 28–29, 346, vol. 2, 137–38.

1880 MNL OL, DF 232 367.

1881 MNL OL, DF 267 897.

1882 MNL OL, DL 75 785 (1516): "in nostris (sc. regis) et tocius regni nostri serviciis cum fidele nostro reverendo in Christo patre domino Petro Beryzlo episcopo ecclesie Wesprimiensis ac regnorum nostrorum Dalmacie, Croacie et Sclavonie bano domino scilicet suo in defensione castrorum nostrorum Boznensium occupatus."

1883 MNL OL, DF 277 175/183–85 ecw.

1884 MNL OL, DL 19 618.

1885 MNL OL, DL 59 940.

1886 MNL OL, DL 106 083/114 ecw. Rékas was partly owned by the Bizerei family: Csánki, *Történelmi földrajz*, vol. II, 19.

1887 MNL OL, DL 106 083/129 ecw: "Michaelis Pewkry de Rekas."

1888 MNL OL, DL 106 083/114 ecw, DF 277 175/183–85 ecw.

1889 MNL OL, Libri regii, vol. 3, 1043–44.

Dorothy, the daughter of Paul Garazdinci.<sup>1890</sup> As we will see below, Paul descended from the Vojk kindred, who had received their lands before the thirteenth century in the same area as the Tétény. Francis was once titled as master, which is the sign of higher education, but we do not know where he obtained it, nor what he used it for. In 1472 he is referred to as a special royal man sent from the court.<sup>1891</sup> In 1529 Gabriel and Francis were convicted of infidelity and their estates granted away by king John Szapolyai.<sup>1892</sup>

One further member of the Pekri family is impossible to be attached to the family tree. Namely, another Michael Pekri is attested as canon of Bács between 1513 and 1521, when he was sent by his provost to palatine Bátori as an envoy.<sup>1893</sup> In 1513 he is called master Michael Pekri of Cil (Chyl), and his kinsmen: Paul and two Nicholas are also mentioned. In 1525 this Paul Pewkhry of Chyl was designated as a lawyer before the chapter of Bács.<sup>1894</sup> Where this Cil lay is uncertain; yet in 1465 the same Nicholas Pwkri of Chyl, who is referred to as dead in 1513, alienated in the name of his son, Peter, and of his two daughters his portions in the village of Bánca, in the county of Bács.<sup>1895</sup> Since this possession was one of the ancient properties of the Bánca kindred,<sup>1896</sup> it is reasonable to suppose that they descended from either of the brothers Nicholas and Stephen, both of whom, as we have seen, married from the Bánca kindred. In 1492 Andrew, *provisor curie* of the castle of Buda, who had married into the same kindred,<sup>1897</sup> also possessed in the same village of Bánca, as well as in some neighbouring settlements, among them in Thyl.<sup>1898</sup> If, what seems extremely probable, this Thyl was but a misspelling of Chyl, we did find another link which attaches this branch of the Pekri family to the Bánca, which provides further support to our hypothesis. In 1527 Paul and Nicholas Pekry of Chyr (!) received a royal grant from Ferdinand I, which attests that at first they followed the course of their distant yet potent kinsman, Louis Pekri,<sup>1899</sup> later on, however, Nicholas apparently changed sides, for in 1559 already his lands in the county of Szatmár were granted away for infidelity.<sup>1900</sup>

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1890 MNL OL, DL 34 333.

1891 MNL OL, DL 17 340.

1892 Laszowski, *Monumenta Habsburgica*, vol. I, 161.

1893 MNL OL, DL 39 612, DL 25 637.

1894 MNL OL, DF 260 420.

1895 MNL OL, DL 39 599.

1896 Karácsonyi, *Magyar Nemzetségek*, 220.

1897 Engel, *Középkori magyar genealógia*, Bánca nem.

1898 MNL OL, DL 19 904.

1899 MNL OL, *Libri regii*, vol. 1, 64–65.

1900 *Ibid.*, vol. 3, 566.

## 2.2.38. Pogány (Pogan de Cheb, de Herbothya/Veliki Poganec)

The Pogány of Cseb (originally of Enyere) were a well-to-do noble family, having lands in more than a dozen villages mostly in the county of Zala, but also in that of Vas.<sup>1901</sup> Most members of the family had been accorded the master title in the late Árpád and the Angevin era,<sup>1902</sup> and one of them, Peter son of Stephen, was alispán of Zala in the 1410s.<sup>1903</sup> In the next generation, however, the horizon of the family widened considerably. Among the three sons of Peter, Thomas Pogány was in the service of the magnate Szécsi family,<sup>1904</sup> whereas Denis belonged to the leading *familiares* of Paul Bánfi. Although both the Szécsi and the Bánfi were counted among the opponents of young king Matthias, the connection apparently did not block the career of the Pogány. In June 1458 Denis Pogány, together with his two brothers, was confirmed by the king in their ancestral lands, and the charter was issued upon the *relatio* of Michael Ország, who was appointed palatine shortly thereafter.<sup>1905</sup> As late as 1477 Denis may have still stood in the service of the Bánfi family, for in that year he was one of the arbitrators between Nicholas, king of Bosnia, and the Bánfi brothers, Nicholas and James.<sup>1906</sup> It was the third brother, Emeric, who acquired the estate of Herbortya in the county of Körös for his family, by marrying Barbara, the daughter and heir of John Ostfi. Emeric himself seems to have moved to the estate of his wife, where a *castellum* was standing, for in 1476 he was one of the royal men designated for the introduction of the Bánfi into the estate of Orbona, and was called of Herbortya on this occasion.<sup>1907</sup> Indeed, already in the upheaval which followed the death of king Ladislas V he had enlarged his lands in the county of Körös to the detriment of the chapter of Zagreb.<sup>1908</sup>

One of the sons of Emeric, master John, became a notary of the king's personal presence,<sup>1909</sup> but it was his cousin, Peter son of Denis, who laid the foundations for the family's rapid social and political rise. As usual, we know nothing about the exact circumstances of his joining the royal court. It is very probable, however, that it was connected to the career of another newly elevated baron from his native region, namely Ladislas Egervári. When we first meet him in 1480, he was staying with the king in Bosnia, and was rewarded for his services with the lands of a distant kinsman of his in the

1901 Csánki, *Történelmi földrajz*, vol. II, 845; vol. III, 175–76. See MNL OL, DL 47 030 (1497), and DF 280 208 (1510), where the possessions of Sigismund Pogány are listed.

1902 Engel, *Középkori magyar genealógia*, Pogány (csébi, enyerei).

1903 Engel, *Archontológia*, vol. I, 237.

1904 MNL OL, DL 14 539.

1905 *Zala vármegye története*, vol. II, 572–73.

1906 MNL OL, DL 33 432.

1907 MNL OL, DL 33 429: "Emericus Pogan de Herbarthya."

1908 MNL OL, DF 256 696.

1909 Bónis, *Jogtudó értelmiség*, 299, n. 27.

county of Zala.<sup>1910</sup> By 1483 he seemed influential enough for his cousins, the sons of Emeric, to enter into a contract of mutual inheritance, which concerned on their part all their inherited lands, the estate of Herbortya comprised, whereas Peter brought in only his movables and those possessions he would eventually be able to get from the king or otherwise acquire for money.<sup>1911</sup> What is sure is that by the late 1480s he had become one of the key figures of the military administration established by king Matthias in conquered Austria, governing several castles, among them that of Wiener Neustadt.<sup>1912</sup> As such, he surely made an oath of allegiance to duke Corvin. Although, as we will see below, he used his growing influence to obtain further possessions, chiefly in Western Hungary, to the north of his family possessions, he was already regarded as a member of the Slavonian nobility, among whose representatives he confirmed the succession of the Habsburgs in March 1492.

He remained an influential member of the government under Wladislaw II as well. He played a leading role in the war against Maximilian of Habsburg, and in May 1491 he took over the important castle of Pressburg together with the county itself.<sup>1913</sup> The castle had originally belonged to duke Corvin by right of pledge, but he alienated it by the same right to Pogány and another ducal *familiaris*, John Bikli. After the death of Peter Pogány it was held for some time by his cousins, the sons of Emeric, until it was eventually redeemed for the king by Ambrose Sárkány for 8000 florins.<sup>1914</sup> In 1493 he was referred to as a royal courtier,<sup>1915</sup> and from 1495 until his death he was again ispán of Pressburg.<sup>1916</sup> Parallely, he also functioned as a royal chamberlain, and as such referred several matters to the chancery.<sup>1917</sup> One such case concerned the dispute between the bishop of Zagreb and the Slavonian nobility, but it is impossible to decide whether his involvement was due to a kind of “specialisation” in Slavonian affairs or a mere matter of chance.<sup>1918</sup> In 1497 he was one of the commissioners sent by the king to negotiate with duke John Corvin.<sup>1919</sup> In 1500 he was appointed as a *decempersona*, that is, one of the non-

1910 *Zala vármegye története*, vol. II, 613–15.

1911 *Ibid.*, 622–24. This charter proves that, contrary to the opinion of Csánki (*Körösmegye*, 12), the Pogány did not possess two fortifications in the county of Körös, but it was the *castellum* otherwise called Herbortya which stood in the village of Oslovce.

1912 Kubinyi, “Két sorsdöntő esztendő,” 7; MNL OL, DL 103 975.

1913 Tibor Neumann, “Békekötés Pozsonyban–országgyűlés Budán. A Jagelló–Habsburg kapcsolatok egy fejezete (1490–1492). Első közlemény” [Peace Treaty at Pressburg–General Assembly at Buda. A Chapter in the History of Habsburg–Jagello Relationship (1490–1492). Part I], *Századok* 144 (2010): 351–52.

1914 MNL OL, DL 103 080 (1507), DL 93 753 (1510).

1915 MNL OL, DL 101 180: “egregius Petrus Pogan aulicus noster.”

1916 MNL OL, DF 212 132 (Sept. 9, 1495); thereafter he is continuously referred to as such.

1917 MNL OL, DL 105 081, DF 225 665, DF 240 795, Tringli, *Perényi család levéltára*, no. 687; Borsa, *Balassa család levéltára*, no. 458.

1918 MNL OL, DF 268 155.

1919 MNL OL, DL 37 716.



magnate courtiers enjoying the privileges of the *barones banderiat* enacted two years before.<sup>1920</sup> Shortly before his heirless<sup>1921</sup> death in 1501 he was appointed as master of the court, and thus entered the tiny circle of barons.<sup>1922</sup>

His cousins, George, Sigismund and John, the sons of Emeric, also stood in royal sevice in the late 1480s, partly at least together with Peter himself.<sup>1923</sup> Later on, however, it is only Sigismund whose career in the financial administration can be followed with some detail. Between 1493 and 1495 he was ispán of the salt chamber of Máramaros,<sup>1924</sup> and in 1503 and 1504 he administered the thirtieth of Kassa.<sup>1925</sup> In the same year, and again in 1510 and 1513–1514 he is referred to as a royal *vexillifer*, a post of dubious nature, but whose main responsibility seems to have been juridical.<sup>1926</sup> Later on he returned to the head of the salt chamber at Máramaros, and then (or parallelly) became ispán of Zala.<sup>1927</sup> He also turns up as a royal councillor.<sup>1928</sup> In 1522 he was one of the envoys sent by the diet of Buda to king Louis II at Prague,<sup>1929</sup> and thence to the *Reichstag* at Nuremberg, and in the next year he is attested as a court *familiaris*.<sup>1930</sup> Still in 1523 he acted as a tax collector in Slavonia,<sup>1931</sup> and assumed the same post a year later again,<sup>1932</sup> when he also appeared as one of the emissaries elected by the assembly of the Slavonian nobility to be sent to the king.<sup>1933</sup> In 1526 it was in the contingent of ban Francis Batthyány,

1920 Kubinyi, "Királyi tanács ülnökei," 266–67, and n. 56.

1921 Pál Engel (*Középkori magyar genealógia*, loc. cit.) identified as his wife Dorothy Bocskai. Yet I have found no source to prove this; indeed, as we have seen above, Nicholas Bocskai married the sister of Peter Pogány, from whom he had a daughter called Dorothy, who then married Francis Kecser.

1922 Kubinyi, "Bárók a királyi tanácsban," 210.

1923 Béla Iványi Dr, ed., *A római szent birodalmi széki gróf Teleki család gyömrői levéltára* [The Gyömrő Archives of the Teleki Family of Szék, Counts of the Holy Roman Empire] (Szeged: n.p., 1931), 168, no. 339; 169, no. 343. The originals of these charters can no more be found in the Hungarian National Archives, nor among the photocopies preserved there.

1924 MNL OL, DL 56 796; Iványi, *Teleki család gyömrői levéltára*, 179, no. 378; MNL OL, DL 98 434.

1925 Iványi, *Teleki család gyömrői levéltára*, 190, no. 418; MNL OL, DL 88 915.

1926 MNL OL, DF 216 681; DF 280 208; Tringli, *Perényi család levéltára*, no. 771; MNL OL, DL 86 745.

1927 MNL OL, DL 86752; Tringli, *Perényi család levéltára*, no. 806; MNL OL, DL 89158; Iványi, *Teleki család gyömrői levéltára*, 211, no. 491; 212, no. 495; 214, nos. 503 and 504; 215, no. 508; 216, no. 511.

1928 MNL OL, DL 23 405.

1929 MNL OL, DF 262 508: "nuntius et orator regni Hungarie."

1930 Béla Iványi, "Adalékok nemzetközi érintkezéseink történetéhez a Jagelló-korban" [On the History of Hungarian Foreign Relations in the Jagello Period], *Történelmi Tár*, 2. sorozat, 1906, 344–49.

1931 MNL OL, DF 232 690; DL 104 420; DL 104 422.

1932 Iványi, *Teleki család gyömrői levéltára*, 218, no. 518.

1933 MNL OL, DL 102 338.

that is, as a member of the Slavonian nobility, that he arrived to the royal army at Mohács, and finished his life on the battlefield.<sup>1934</sup>

Both Peter and Sigismund profited from their influence at court to acquire new possessions, but not in Slavonia. Before 1493 Peter held the market town of Rohonc (Rechnitz, AU) by right of pledge. In 1495 he received, together with his cousin Sigismund, the inheritance of Thomas of Úrmező in the county of Máramaros.<sup>1935</sup> Three years later it was again Peter who took into pledge from duke Corvin the castle of Hunyad (Hunedoara, RO),<sup>1936</sup> and a year later he received from the king lands confiscated for infidelity in the county of Szabolcs.<sup>1937</sup> The scale of his ambitions is indicated by the fact that in the same year he petitioned from the king the inheritance of John Ellerbach, which comprised one castle and three *castella*, in the company of the archbishop of Esztergom, the palatine and the judge royal.<sup>1938</sup> Although eventually his efforts came to naught, he had more luck with the lands of John Szentgróti, that is, the castle of Szentgrót (Zala c.) and its appurtenances, into which he was introduced, together with George Móre of Csula, upon royal order.<sup>1939</sup> Before 1503 Sigismund obtained the castle of Kövesd (Kamenec, SL) in the county of Zemplén,<sup>1940</sup> and in 1504 he took into pledge for the enormous sum of 2400 florins the estates of Gerard Tibai of Nagymihály (Mihalovce/Vinné, SL), with the two castles of Nagymihály and Bukovc, in the counties of Zemplén and Ung respectively; yet the letter of introduction was only issued in 1517, and there is no evidence that he did in fact occupy them.<sup>1941</sup> As so many others, Sigismund was rewarded with further possessions after the suppression of the peasant rising of 1514.<sup>1942</sup> It was evidently in connection with his office at the chamber of Máramaros that he obtained a house at Huszt (Хыст, UA).<sup>1943</sup> In 1518 he took into pledge lands in the three counties of Bereg, Szabolcs and Abaúj.<sup>1944</sup> In 1522 Paul Várdai, bishop of Veszprém, and royal treasurer, pledged to him half of his bishopric, the castles of Veszprém

1934 András Kubinyi, "A mohácsi csata és előzményei" [The Battle of Mohács and its Antecedents], in idem, *Nándorfehérvártól Mohácsig. A Mátyás- és Jagelló-kor hadtörténete* [From Belgrade to Mohács. Military History of Hungary under Matthias and the Jagellos] (Budapest: Argumentum, 2007), 191–92.

1935 MNL OL, DF 212 132.

1936 MNL OL, DL 37 718.

1937 MNL OL, DL 105 416.

1938 MNL OL, DL 101 262.

1939 MNL OL, DL 101 267.

1940 The formal exchange of possessions with Ladislas Szerdahelyi, which involved on the part of the latter the castle of Kövesd, took place only in 1512 before the convent of Lelesz (MNL OL, DL 89 021). Yet Sigismund dated two letters "ex castro nostro Kewesd" in 1503, which proves that he was already in possession of it at that time: DF 216 624, DF 216 626.

1941 MNL OL, DL 88 915, DL 89 091.

1942 Borsa, *Balassa család levéltára*, 508.

1943 MNL OL, DL 47 398.

1944 The villages were pledged to him for the 1600 florins which he had lent to the treasurer "ad facta et negocia [...] domini nostri regis:" MNL OL, DL 89 126.

and Sümeg included, in return for the enormous sum of 6300 florins which he owed to him as ispán of the salt chamber of Máramaros.<sup>1945</sup> Sigismund also acquired somehow half of the village of (Tápió)szentmárton in the county of Pest, which he donated in 1525 to Stephen Verbőci.<sup>1946</sup> A necessary consequence of all these offices and land acquisitions was that Sigismund was permanently absent from his Slavonian estates.<sup>1947</sup> This absence, on the other hand, may have been the cause of the fact that his acquisitions in Slavonia were on a much smaller scale or aborted altogether.

Before 1502 it was Peter Pogány who reobtained the lands of Nicholas Bocskai, evidently for the benefit of his own sister, who had married Nicholas.<sup>1948</sup> These lands, however, namely the portions of the estate of Raszinyakeresztúr, devolved later with the hands of the widowed Dorothy Bocskai upon her husband, Francis Kecser. Ten years later Sigismund tried to have himself introduced into the estates of the late Peter Bocskai by right of pledge, but his effort foundered upon the resistance of Louis Pekri.<sup>1949</sup> It was the son of Sigismund, Peter, born from Euphrosyne Várdai, who continued the family after Mohács.<sup>1950</sup> They abandoned their Slavonian lands, however, and moved definitively to their estates north of the Drava.<sup>1951</sup>

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1945 MNL OL, DL 89 158.

1946 MNL OL, DL 72 216.

1947 MNL OL, DF 262 028: [Sigismund] “ad presens personalem residenciam non in ipsa Herbolthya et per consequens in hoc regno Sclavonie sed in partibus regni Hungarie haberet.” This does not mean, however, that he never turned up there or in the wider region. In the spring he issued a quittance for his *familiares* who had accounted for the tax collected in Máramaros at Herbortya (DL 86 757), and he also stayed there in May 1525 (DL 56 815). In April 1526 it is his wife who is attested at Herbortya: DL 82 716. In 1514 he was one of the arbitrators in the case between archbishop Thomas Bakóc and the Bánfi brothers on the one hand, and Benedict Batthyány on the other, together with other noblemen from the counties of Körös and Zala (DF 252 279), whereas two years later he again emerges as an arbitrator between the same Bánfi brothers and Paul Kerecsényi, this time at the market town of Páka in the county of Zala (DL 94325). Interestingly, Herbortya seems to have been regarded as his residence, despite the fact that he was regularly absent, as is shown by a letter from 1516: “Sigismundum Pogan domi non invenerunt, dicunt ipsum esse Hungarie,” says a letter written in Slavonia (DL 25 574).

1948 MNL OL, DF 276 912.

1949 MNL OL, DL 47 013.

1950 MNL OL, DL 106 083/193 ecw (his wife); DL 97 684 (his son, Peter).

1951 No member of the family appears in any of the Slavonian tax registers after 1526. The lands of Melchior Pogány in Máramaros were granted away for infidelity by king Ferdinand: MNL OL, Libri regii, vol. 3, 346–47 (see also *ibid.*, 701–02). Sigismund Pogány was alispán of Zala and tax collector in the same county in the first half of the seventeenth century: András Molnár, ed., *Zala megye archontológiája* [The Archontology of Zala County] 1138–2000 (Zalaegerszeg: Zala Megyei Levéltár, 2000), 252, 258.

## 2.2.39. Nicholas Pozsegai (de Posega)

Nicholas Pozsegai seems to have come from the Györkvölgyi family in the neighbouring county of Pozsega.<sup>1952</sup> The mere fact that he was known in neighbouring Slavonia by the name of his native county shows that he rose from the ranks of the petty nobility. We do not know how he met treasurer John Ernuszt, whom he served until the latter's death in 1476. Still merely *nobilis*, he is first attested in 1472 as castellan of Szombathely and administrator of the tax in the county of Vas.<sup>1953</sup> Somewhat later he accompanied his lord to Slavonia who appointed him as his castellan of Sztrigó. He married the daughter of Christoph Paschingar and Susan Pekri called Helen,<sup>1954</sup> and thus acquired the estate of Garignica in the county of Körös. As we have seen above, it was as a leading *familiaris* of Ernuszt that he occupied the castle of Dobrakucsa for his lord, of which he was also castellan for some time.<sup>1955</sup> The service of Ernuszt must have been a lucrative job, for Pozsegai was able to take several estates into pledge in the region of Garignica, which also hosted a *castellum*;<sup>1956</sup> thereafter he was consequently called of his new possession. Shortly after the appointment of Ernuszt as ban of Slavonia (Nov. 1473) he became his viceban, and held the office first together with Ladislás Hermanfi and later with Peter Bocskai.

The disappearance of Ernuszt and the confusion lingering over his inheritance involved serious dangers not only for his sons<sup>1957</sup> but also for his

1952 In 1476 he is said to have killed "quendam Blasium de Gyewrkwelgh fratrem suum sibi in propinqua linea consanguineitatis attinentem" (MNL OL, DL 103 789). It is, however, impossible to link him to the few known members of the family: Michael son of Gregory, who is mentioned in 1424 (*Zsigmondkori Oklevéltár*, vol. XI, no. 733); and Stephen, who is mentioned as a neighbour in 1489 (MNL OL, DL 33496) and as a royal man two years later (DL 19 713).

1953 MNL OL, DF 261 757: "nobili Nicolao de Posega castellano castri Zombathel ac dicatori et exactori presentis taxe octuaginta denariorum in comitatu Castriferrei constituto." In fact, Szombathely belonged to the bishopric of Győr, then headed by the Slavonian Demetrius Csúpor. It is thus possible that he had originally followed the prelate and joined Ernuszt thereafter. A letter dated by him at Szombathely from early 1472 survives: DL 93 452.

1954 MNL OL, DL 100 829: "egregius Nicolaus de Posega capitaneus castri Sthrygo sponsus nobilis puelle Elena vocate filie quondam Christofori Passyngar de Garygnycza ex nobili domina Swsko vocata filia quondam Ladislai de Peker progenite" (also DL 103 740).

1955 See the chapter on the Nelepec. Cf. MNL OL, DL 107 021 (castellan).

1956 He took into pledge the portions of Michael Csezmicei at Laztesin and Butkafölde (MNL OL, DF 231 663), and those of Stephen and Ladislás Bicskele at the same Butkafölde together with their *curia* there, and further portions at Palicsnaszentpéter and Mocsila (DL 103 757). Nicholas Pozsegai also had a *curia* at Markovc (DL 103 785).

1957 The abstract published in Stipišić-Šamšalović, *Isprave*, no. 2841 and, consequently, the interpretation of András Kubinyi based on it ("Ernuszt Zsigmond," 313) is wrong. According to the original charter (MNL OL, DF 231 190), king Matthias, as the chief executor of the elder John's will (*tamquam executor principalis*) ordered the sale of the castle of Szentgyörgy and of the two castella belonging to it, in order to effectively comply with the testamentary dispositions of the late treasurer, and eventually sold it to bishop

retainers, however.<sup>1958</sup> The estate of Garignica had been donated to Ladislás Karai, provost of Buda, as early as 1466,<sup>1959</sup> but he was unable to make good his claim. In June 1476 Karai, who had been appointed as *personalis* in the meantime, received again from the king the estate of Garignica, together with all the other possessions of Nicholas Pozsegai, who was then sentenced for fratricide.<sup>1960</sup> Moreover, evidently upon hearing the royal judgement, the estate was also petitioned by Andrew Dánfi, ban of Croatia, and Andrew Lábatlani.<sup>1961</sup> By December 1476 Pozsegai was able to reach a compromise with provost Ladislás,<sup>1962</sup> and also to obtain royal grace, for none of his possessions seems to have been lost. On two occasions, in 1474 and 1478, he was listed fifth among the representatives of the Slavonian nobility.

Yet his situation remained precarious. In a case pursued parallelly against Helen Paschingar, as the heir of Susan Pekri, the judge royal decided in favour of provost Ladislás in 1478, but the wife of Nicholas forcefully prevented the execution.<sup>1963</sup> This act probably remained unpunished, and that it was so must have been due to the new lords and protectors of Pozsegai. One of them, Urban Nagylucsei, was another former *familiaris* of Ernuszt, and ultimately his follower at the head of the treasury;<sup>1964</sup> this relationship is thus in no need of explanation. The other, Paul Kinizsi, had no relationship to Slavonia; he also began his career in the financial administration in the early 1470s, and may have met Pozsegai there. In any case, shortly after Kinizsi's appointment as ispán of Temes in 1479 Nicholas Pozsegai was ordered by the king to join him at Temesvár for the anti-Ottoman campaign. Since the Slavonian nobles were not mobilised outside Slavonia, the mission of Pozsegai may indicate that he was somehow attached to the court, perhaps through Nagylucsei or Kinizsi.<sup>1965</sup>

In 1481 he was again proscribed for fratricide at the assembly of Zagreb,<sup>1966</sup> and ban Ladislás Egervári immediately petitioned some of his estates from

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Sigismund and his brother in exchange for 20.000 florins and the castle of Dobrakucsá, which was thus not given to but alienated from them in 1477.

1958 See the letter of George Forster, castellan of Csáktornya, to Nicholas Pozsegai: MNL OL, DL 103 782.

1959 MNL OL, DL 100 753.

1960 MNL OL, DL 103 789. See Bónis, *Jogtudó értelmiség*, 228, for the career of Karai.

1961 MNL OL, DL 103 788.

1962 MNL OL, DL 100 875. Provost Ladislás resigned his rights concerning the estate of Garignica, based on the royal donation, in return for 800 florins to be paid by Nicholas Pozsegai partly in cash, partly in land.

1963 MNL OL, DL 103 834.

1964 András Kubinyi, "A kincstári személyzet a XV. század második felében" [The Personnel of the Treasury in the Second Half of the Fifteenth Century], *Tanulmányok Budapest Múltjából* 12 (1957), 31–32. In fact, the provost master Urban who is mentioned by George Forster in the letter cited above is surely identical with Urban Nagylucsei.

1965 All this is known from his testament prepared in July 1479 at Garignica: MNL OL, DL 45 790.

1966 Tringli, "Szlavóniai közgyűlés," 316.

the king.<sup>1967</sup> The outcome of the affair is not known, and Pozsegai died soon afterwards.<sup>1968</sup> Although he had a son, called Leonard,<sup>1969</sup> he had no chances of inheriting his father's possessions; the latter were declared as having escheated to the crown and (as we have seen above), donated to an Italian *familiaris* of queen Beatrix.<sup>1970</sup> There is no further trace of Leonard Pozsegai, and so the career of the family in Slavonia ended within less than a decade.

#### 2.2.40. Prasovci (Praščevec, de Praschowcz)

The ancestors of the Prasovci family very probably belonged to the castle nobility of Körös as well.<sup>1971</sup> Nothing is known about their history up to the middle of the fifteenth century, although they were by no means poor.<sup>1972</sup> In 1445/1446 their only possession of Prasovc was devastated by the counts of Cilli, an indication that they may have belonged to the supporters of the Tallóci brothers. The fact that the village was donated to them by right of new donation by governor John Hunyadi in August 1446 at Szeged, points in the same direction.<sup>1973</sup> Thereafter they lived the life of the petty nobility, engaging in their habitual activities. Ladislav and Blaise, sons of Paul, both functioned as royal men,<sup>1974</sup> whereas the third brother, George, besides assuming the same function, also acted as a lawyer at the banal seat, and was elected as szolgabíró of Körös.<sup>1975</sup>

In the next generation it was his nephew, the son of Blaise, likewise called George,<sup>1976</sup> who continued the family tradition. In the late eighties we find him among the elected noble jurors of Körös,<sup>1977</sup> then he was likewise elected as a szolgabíró in the same county, and at the same time he also acted as special commissioner attached to the banal court.<sup>1978</sup> His long career within

1967 MNL OL, DL 103 851.

1968 Before 9 February 1482: MNL OL, DL 103 786.

1969 MNL OL, DL 45 790, DL 103 851.

1970 For the references see the chapter on the Kapitánfi.

1971 In 1499 George Prasovci claimed the lands of the late Peter Mikcsec as having devolved upon him ("in ipsum exponentem tamquam fratrem condivisionalem fuissent condescende:" MNL OL, DF 232 028); in fact, the parents (or relatives, depending on the sense of the word *parentum*) of George were buried in the church of the Virgin Mary at Cirkvena, and George himself wanted to be buried there: DF 232 179.

1972 The possession of Prasovc itself contained some twenty inhabited tenant plots. Adamček-Kampuš, *Popisi*, 15, 26.

1973 MNL OL, DF 231 287.

1974 MNL OL, DF 231 362 (1455); DF 231 372 (1456); DF 282 430 (1458); DF 231 844 (1492).

1975 MNL OL, DL 100 658 (1454), lawyer; DL 103 639 (1455), szolgabíró.

1976 MNL OL, DF 232 028 (1499): "Georgii filii quondam Blasii de Praschowcz." His uncle, George son of Paul, died before 1464: DL 100 743.

1977 MNL OL, DL 101 080, DL 19 557.

1978 Between 1492 and 1496 he seems to have been continuously in office, so I only give the first and last references: MNL OL, DF 231 839, DF 231 956; again, between 1501 and 1504 there



the county certainly earned him respect, for in 1499 he was an arbitrator in the case between the Ernuszt family and the chapter of Csázma in the company of three former vicebans.<sup>1979</sup> From the register attached to his testament, drafted in 1505, it appears that he held many pieces of property in pledge, perhaps more than the total of his family inheritance, and he lent money to several people, nobles and peasants alike. This proves that during his long career he was able to accumulate not only esteem but also a considerable amount of money. It is certainly not surprising that he recommended his family into the protection of two such figures of authority as George Kerecsényi and Elias Bosnyák.<sup>1980</sup>

His son, Stephen, followed in the footsteps of his father, but, perhaps with the support of one of the two persons mentioned above, already found his way to the royal court. In 1503 it was upon the intervention of unnamed patrons that Stephen and his sister, Catherine, were confirmed by Wladislaw II in their portions at Sabnिकासzentiván and two neighbouring villages.<sup>1981</sup> In 1505 he was already a notary in the royal chancellery, and it was as such that he received, together precisely with Elias Bosnyák and the castellan of Dombóvár, all three titled *egregius*, lands in the county of Zagreb.<sup>1982</sup> Later on he seems to have returned to his native land, where, in the early 1510s, he turns up frequently as a royal man.<sup>1983</sup> Before February 1517 he was likewise elected as *szolgabíró* in the county of Körös, and served as such until 1520.<sup>1984</sup> In the meantime, however, he was appointed by bishop Simon as his *provisor* at Zagreb,<sup>1985</sup> and in 1522 at the latest he became his *vicarius generalis*,<sup>1986</sup> a post which must have been then as before lucrative enough to embark on a massive process of land acquisition. Already in 1519 he obtained half of the *castellum* at Csányó (Čanjevo, CRO) in the county of Körös, from the brother of his wife, Paul Spiranić, former viceban of Croatia.<sup>1987</sup> In the following years he took many pieces of property into pledge, a sure sign that he had a lot of cash to

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seems no break in his service, although from 1503 I have found no mention of him as *szolgabíró*: DF 277 021 (1501); DF 252 223 (1502); DF 219 141 (1504); DL 68 716: “de sede nostra banali [...] specialiter transmissus.”

1979 MNL OL, DF 282 462.

1980 MNL OL, DF 232 179, with the register attached thereto.

1981 MNL OL, DL 32 047. It may already have been due to the increasing influence of Stephen that in 1501 the two daughters of Ladislav Prasovci, who had been born from the daughter of John Kernyak of Poljana (Varasd c.) were prefected by the king in their portion at Poljana: DL 68 722. John Kernyak himself was also a much-employed Slavonian attorney, who apparently proved unable to make landed acquisitions on any scale.

1982 MNL OL, DF 255 550.

1983 MNL OL, DF 252 269 (1512), DF 219 225 (1513), DF 274 934 (1517).

1984 MNL OL, DF 219 373 (1517); DF 219 285 (1518); DF 219 306 (1519); DF 268 424 (1520).

1985 *Levél-tári Közlemények* 5 (1927), 204 (1516); *ibid.*, 207 (1517); MNL OL, DL 104 345 (1518), where the Z. in the subscription evidently means Zagrabiensis.

1986 MNL OL, DL 33 095: “ecclesie Zagrabiensis in temporalibus vicarius generalis”; DF 277 175/317–23 *ecw*: “administrator proventuum episcopatus Zagrabiensis.”

1987 MNL OL, DF 232 531.

spend, but his main source of acquisition seems to have been his influence as administrator of the episcopal lands.<sup>1988</sup> Stephen was apparently as successful as unscrupulous, and, although it is precisely from the years of his rapid enrichment that the tax registers are missing, it is evident that by the middle of the 1520s he was one of the richest noblemen in the region. He held portions in dozens of villages, mostly by right of pledge, it is true.<sup>1989</sup> No miracle, then, that he was constantly titled *egregius*. He survived Mohács by many years, and continued to serve the bishop of Zagreb as well as to further augment his possessions.<sup>1990</sup> By the early 1540s, he had already erected a fortification at Prasovc.<sup>1991</sup> The family survived right into the seventeenth century and continued to play an outstanding role in the history of Slavonia.<sup>1992</sup>

#### 2.2.41. Predrihoi (Predrihovo, de Predryho)

Predriho was one of the appurtenances of the castle of Siklós in the county of Körös.<sup>1993</sup> It was thus beyond doubt given by duke John Corvin to Marcinko who is first mentioned in 1494 as the captain of the duke's troops.<sup>1994</sup> He was the son of Simon of *Dampno*, equally called Jezdarić (Jezdarich),<sup>1995</sup> and also of Zsupánpaták,<sup>1996</sup> that is, he evidently came from the Bosnian town of Duvno, earlier called Dumno.<sup>1997</sup> Indeed, duke Corvin himself referred in 1497 to the the services that Marcinko had done to the late king Matthias, so his career no doubt started before 1490.<sup>1998</sup> In 1496 his lands in Körös were occupied by Andrew Both, who had received from the duke the castle of Siklós, and seems

1988 MNL OL, DF 277 175/25–27 ecw; *ibid.*, 125–31 ecw; *ibid.*, 141–43 ecw; *ibid.*, 179–83 ecw; *ibid.*, 237–41 ecw; *ibid.*, 317–23 ecw; *ibid.*, 395 ecw.

1989 See, alongside the charters cited in the previous note, Adamček–Kampuš, *Popisi*, 56, 91, 93, 105.

1990 See Szabolcs Varga, *Szlavónia berendezkedése a késő középkor és kora újkor hajnalán* [The Government of Slavonia at the Dawn of the Modern Age]. Unpublished PhD dissertation (Pécs: JPTE, 2008), 352. In 1547 he served as the master of the court of ban Nicholas of Zrin: MNL OL, Libri regii, vol. 12, 145.

1991 Adamček–Kampuš, *Popisi*, 136.

1992 See for instance Pálffy, “Budróci Budor család,” 956. MNL OL, Libri regii, vol. 12, 139 (1659).

1993 MNL OL, DL 75 707: “Predryho, Newkes, Zenthwyd, Rachan et Wakar [...] in Crisiensi” [comitatu].

1994 MNL OL, DF 231 902: “Martinkone de Predryhowo capitanei (!) gencium eiusdem domini Johannis ducis.”

1995 MNL OL, DF 233 410: “Martinus Simonis de Dumpno;” DF 232 533: “quondam Marchynkonis de Dwman;” DF 231978: “Johannem filium quondam Simonis Jezdarych de Predryho.”

1996 MNL OL, DF 231 978: “Marthynkoni de Swpanpothok alias de Predrykowo.

1997 Today Tomislavgrad, Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

1998 MNL OL, DF 231 978.

to have laid claim to all of its appurtenances.<sup>1999</sup> Late in the same year he was appointed as the duke's viceban of Slavonia, and received from him the castle lordship of Oszterc in the county of Varasd.<sup>2000</sup> He also acquired other lands in Varasd by way of violence.<sup>2001</sup> After Corvin's return to the royal favour he probably served him at first as his viceban in Croatia and Dalmatia,<sup>2002</sup> before reassuming the same office in Slavonia as well. Later on he was allegedly bribed by the Venetians into handing over to them the castle of Knin, and was consequently captured by the duke.<sup>2003</sup> This incident surely accounts for the fact that he completely disappears from our sources after February 1500.

Marcinko had three brothers, one called Gregory, the other two John, one of whom at least was literate.<sup>2004</sup> In 1513 the only surviving among the four brothers, John called Ivica, married Helen, the daughter of Louis Pekri. According to his own words, he was then the only surviving male member of his family, he therefore bequeathed all his possessions to his father-in-law, Louis Pekri and his sons, whom he had adopted as his brothers.<sup>2005</sup> From this charter it appears that besides the considerable estates in the counties of Varasd and Körös, Marcinko had also obtained some lands in that of Bihar, presumably likewise from his lord, duke Corvin. Before January 1516 John Ivica died without offspring, and his possessions were donated by the king to palatine Emeric Perényi.<sup>2006</sup> Whereas the estate of Oszterc did devolve upon the Pekri,<sup>2007</sup> Predriho seems to have been reallocated to the castle of Siklós by palatine Perényi.<sup>2008</sup> The four brothers also had two sisters, one of whom, called Anne, married a Slavonian nobleman, Anthony Borotva of Mocsila, whereas the other, Margaret, became the wife of Paul Bwsanych of Bwsan.<sup>2009</sup> Apparently none of the two husbands inherited any of their brother-in-law's acquisitions.

#### 2.2.42. Rohfi of Décse (de Deche, Decche)

Their origin again presents difficulties which cannot be solved with absolute certainty. The *comes* Ruh/Roh from whom the Roh(fi) family descended appears for the first time in 1263, when he buys the land of Décse (*Descha*) in

1999 MNL OL, DL 46 337.

2000 MNL OL, DF 231 978.

2001 MNL OL, DF 274 952.

2002 MNL OL, DF 233 410.

2003 Gyula Schönherr, *Hunyadi Corvin János* [Duke John Corvin] (Budapest: Magyar Történelmi Társulat, 1894), 276.

2004 MNL OL, DF 274 952; DL 94 734 (1510): "Gregorius Simonovich de Ozthercz."

2005 MNL OL, DF 232 371: "de sua stirpe nullus masculini generis superesset."

2006 MNL OL, DL 22 743.

2007 MNL OL, DL 33 075 (1517): "providus Clemens de Ozthercz jobagio domine Elene relicte quondam Iwycza."

2008 MNL OL, DF 252 278. See also DL 22 743.

2009 MNL OL, DF 232 533; DF 277 175/ 427–28 ecw.

the county of Garics.<sup>2010</sup> Two years later he had this act confirmed by king Béla IV, who donated to him at the same time a huge stretch of land belonging to the castle of Garics.<sup>2011</sup> In 1273 king Ladislas IV rewarded the services which *comes* Roh had made to his predecessors, kings Béla IV and Stephen V, and to himself, and especially referred to his participation in the Bohemian war, where he appeared with a number of good warriors, although he had no office on account of which he would have been expected to do so.<sup>2012</sup> Still in the same year Ladislas IV exempted all his possessions, namely that of Kutenya (Kutina) in the county of Gerzence, those of Décse and Polositica in the county of Garics, which he had either bought from local castle warriors or received as a donation from king Béla IV, from all hereditary services, and authorised him to possess them by the right of the Slavonian nobility.<sup>2013</sup>

Although the evidence available is not beyond all doubt, it is extremely probable that *comes* Roh acquired all his known possessions in Slavonia either through purchase or by royal donation. It is thus legitimate to suppose that he was not indigenous in Slavonia but arrived there sometime before 1263. And we do have traces, albeit quite late, that it was indeed the case. In October 1402 John and Ladislas Roh presented some documents to king Sigismund, which proved that the possession called *Beez* in the county of Zólyom (Zvolen, SL) had once belonged to their ancestor called Tegzew.<sup>2014</sup> In 1417 we learn that the other name of the possession was *Királyfalva* (*Kyralfalua*), and was partially in the hands of the descendants of Peter called Tegzew.<sup>2015</sup> Since the name Tegzew was especially rare, it is with reasonable hope that we search for a joint mention of Ruh and Tegzew or at least for some link between the two. It is evident, however, that the county of Zólyom, which had remained uninhabited woodland until the Mongol invasion, could not be the place of origin of either *comes* Roh or Tegzew. In a charter of Béla IV dated to April 1244 we do find *comes* Ruch and Thegzeu (*Schegzen*), upon whose request the king ennobles their kinsmen, *udvarnoks* in the Csallóköz.<sup>2016</sup> Although the document concerned is a manifest forgery, known only from a later transcription, the

2010 Smičiklas, *Codex diplomaticus*, vol. V, 358–60.

2011 Szentpéteri–Borsa, *Árpád-házi királyok*, no. 1467.

2012 Smičiklas, *Codex diplomaticus*, vol. VI, 39 (“idem comes Ruh licet tunc nullo esset honoris culmine sublimatus, ad nostrum venit exercitum ducens secum manu potentes milites et in belli examine virtuosos”), but see Szentpéteri–Borsa, *Árpád-házi királyok*, no. 2361, where the war against the Bohemians is not mentioned, and the authenticity of the charter is otherwise not beyond all doubt.

2013 Szentpéteri–Borsa, *Árpád-házi királyok*, no. 2361. The Dyene mentioned in this charter seems to have been the namegiver of Dianvára/Dianfölda.

2014 MNL OL, DL 42 782: “quedam possessio Beech vocata in comitatu Zoliensi existens [...] quondam Tegzew predecessoris ipsorum extitisset, que ipsis tanquam legitimis successoribus ipsius Tegzew omnis juris titulo pertineret.”

2015 *Zsigmondkori Oklevéltár*, vol. VI, no. 1202.

2016 Fejér, *Codex diplomaticus*, vol. 4/I, 333–34. On its authenticity see Szentpéteri–Borsa, *Árpád-házi királyok*, no. 761. See also Richard Marsina ed., *Codex diplomaticus et epistolaris Slovaciae*

joint mention of Roh and Tegzew certainly deserves attention. Unfortunately, it is the closest we can get to the possible origins of the family, but even until further research will shed more light on the problem we can state with some probability that the Rohfi of Décse were not indigenous in Slavonia.

In the course of the fourteenth century the son and grandsons of *comes* Roh frequently turn up in the sources in different cases of litigation and minor property transfers, almost always bearing the title of master, but these charters tell us nothing about their non-legal activity.<sup>2017</sup> The first among them known to have held any office is John, grandson of Roh, who is attested as *ispán* of Gerzence in 1385.<sup>2018</sup> Sometime during the first tumultuous years of king Sigismund's reign their estates were donated to Nicholas of Kostajnica on the grounds that Ladislás and John Roh had taken part among the retainers of the Horváti brothers in the skirmish at Gara. Although they do not seem to have effectively lost their lands, in 1412 they judged it necessary (or were compelled) to prove anew their fidelity to the king, who, after an inquisition and according to the testimony of the charters presented by the Roh brothers, gave them all their estates by right of new donation.<sup>2019</sup> In the meantime, on 5 October 1402 they received a donation from king Sigismund at Pressburg, which proves that they were present at the congregation which confirmed the inheritance of Albert of Habsburg in Hungary, even though they did not seal the charter itself.<sup>2020</sup>

John Roh was in the service of palatine Nicholas Garai, and accompanied his lord for the coronation of Sigismund as king of the Romans to Aachen.<sup>2021</sup> His brother Ladislás presumably fought in the Venetian war, for he received another new donation concerning their possessions in the county of Dubica in May 1413 at Udine.<sup>2022</sup>

Ladislás and John Roh tried with all possible means to enlarge their hereditary possessions. They obtained the estate of Szentjakab from king Sigismund partly in exchange for other possessions, partly for the considerable sum of 1200 golden florins. The estate was given to them as property confiscated for infidelity, but they were compelled to return it in 1408 upon royal pressure.<sup>2023</sup> They also wanted to occupy by right of pledge the possessions of the Töttös family, which bordered upon their own estates along the Sava river.<sup>2024</sup> Although none of these efforts is known to have yielded

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II. Inde ab a. MCCXXV usque ad a. MCCLX (Bratislavae. n.p., 1987) 48, where the name is given in the form of Thegzeu.

2017 Smičiklas, *Codex diplomaticus*, vol. XI, 64; *ibid.*, vol. XIII, 299–301; *ibid.*, vol. XIV, 519; *ibid.*, vol. XV, 235.

2018 Engel, *Archontológia*, vol. I, 252.

2019 *Zsigmondkori Oklevéltár*, vol. III, no. 2736.

2020 See the charter cited in the note 2077 above.

2021 *Zsigmondkori Oklevéltár*, vol. IV, no. 564.

2022 *Ibid.*, vol. IV, no. 640.

2023 *Ibid.*, vol. II/2, no. 5989.

2024 *Ibid.*, vol. V, no. 2378.

lasting fruits, they do show that they were not lacking the necessary financial means, even if it is impossible to tell how they acquired them. John was active as a lawyer,<sup>2025</sup> and he also turns up in an important arbitration in 1417, which shows that he had some legal knowledge.<sup>2026</sup>

In the next generation, among the three sons of Ladislás, Stephen, Andrew and John, and Ladislás, son of John, apparently the latter was the most active. In his petition presented to the papal court in 1432 he proudly referred to himself as “lord of the castle of Veszele,”<sup>2027</sup> and his behaviour was entirely in keeping with the self-image reflected by this title. From 1427 on he spent as much as a thousand golden florins upon the acquisition of the neighbouring estate of Újudvar and the *castellum* standing there, partly at least together with his cousins.<sup>2028</sup> He paid even more for portions of the estate of Kristallóc, pledged to him by John Szerecsen for 1550 florins.<sup>2029</sup> An even more valuable, though also temporary, acquisition was the town of Tolnavár in the county of Tolna, which likewise belonged to Ladislás by right of pledge.<sup>2030</sup> He also took into pledge the village of Torcsec (*Thorchech*) from Ladislás Latk for 150 florins,<sup>2031</sup> and parts of the estate of Desnice for 160.<sup>2032</sup> In the 1440s he at first tried to occupy forcefully, together with members of the Kapitánfi family, some possessions which the widow of Andrew Kapitánfi had bequeathed to the monks of Garics,<sup>2033</sup> then, in 1446, in a series of particularly violent assaults, he devastated the possessions of Ladislás Pekri, burning down his house and those of his tenants, and taking off all the material gathered there for the construction of a *castellum*.<sup>2034</sup> He nevertheless fully enjoyed the confidence of the local nobility, for in 1436 he was one of the collectors of the tax ordered to be levied by emperor Sigismund,<sup>2035</sup> and in 1442 he acted as one of the Slavonian envoys at the diet held at Buda.<sup>2036</sup> It was also Ladislás Roh who, in the name of the Slavonian nobility, had the decrees of king Albert transcribed by the chapter of Csázma in 1439.<sup>2037</sup> He was also present, together with his cousin, Stephen, at the congregation of the Slavonian nobility at Körös in 1439. He died before 1453.

2025 Ibid., vol. VI, no. 213.

2026 Ibid., vol. VI, no. 803.

2027 Lukinović, *Povijesni spomenici*, vol. VI, 352: “domino castri in Wesalia.”

2028 MNL OL, DL 106 957; DL 103 513; DL 43 777; DL 103 553; DL 44 049.

2029 MNL OL, DF 278 378.

2030 MNL OL, DL 44 606. Tolna belonged to the queen’s demesne before the 1450s, so it must have been Barbara of Cilli who alienated it to Ladislás Roh. Cf. Csánki, *Történelmi földrajz*, vol. III, 412.

2031 MNL OL, DL 103 661.

2032 MNL OL, DL 45 056.

2033 *Levéltári Közlemények* 11 (1933): 81.

2034 See the chapter on the Pekri family.

2035 *Levéltári Közlemények* 3 (1925): 139.

2036 Teleki, *Hunyadiak kora*, vol. X, 120.

2037 MNL OL, DF 268 078.



In May 1456 the *familiares* of Stephen and Ladislás Roh junior were involved in a violent assault which later assumed a political character and was punished as a crime of infidelity. The reason why they supported Simon Nagy, a *familiaris* of John Hunyadi in Slavonia, in taking the *castellum* of Garignica, then in the hands of a *familiaris* of count Ulrich of Cilli, is unknown. It is interesting that whereas in the report of the investigation prepared by the szolgabírák of Körös county in May 1456 they were listed among the instigators of the action,<sup>2038</sup> in the royal judgement, issued in August of the same year, they were left unmentioned.<sup>2039</sup> Another, albeit quite vague, trace also points in the direction of a possible link with the Hunyadi family. For it was Ladislás Roh who redeemed some charters concerning the possessions of the priory of Vrana, which had been taken by Alexander (Sandrin) Berzencei at the time when the counts of Cilli had besieged the castles of the priory. The prior in question was Thomas Székely of Szentgyörgy, a kinsman of the late John Hunyadi, who rewarded with an uninhabited *predium* the services of Ladislás.<sup>2040</sup>

This latter Ladislás, the son of Stephen, was beyond doubt the most outstanding figure of the family in the fifteenth century. In 1464 he was appointed as Slavonian viceban by Nicholas Újlaki, and seems to have used his office and the corresponding authority of his lord for further territorial expansion. With reference to a royal letter of protection he occupied the town of Rojcsa from the Dersfi family,<sup>2041</sup> whereas upon the tenants of Stephen Csupor at Monoszló he imposed an extraordinary tax, and collected the revenues for himself.<sup>2042</sup> Although sometime in the beginning of 1466 he was replaced by John Macedóniai in the office of viceban, his authority remained considerable. At the congregation of the Slavonian nobility in January 1471 he was listed first, and soon reappeared as viceban and ispán of Zagreb in the service of Damian Horvát of Litva. As such he obtained the castle of Kozora (Kozarac, BIH) in the county of Szana, among circumstances which appear as rather obscure. Whereas Ladislás himself stated later that he had paid 3,000 florins for the castle and its appurtenances to Nicholas Székely, presumably a kinsman of prior Thomas,<sup>2043</sup> the king's attorney maintained in 1481 that it was with royal revenues and as the deputy of ban Damian Horvát that Ladislás had redeemed the castle and consequently had been holding it without any royal authorisation.<sup>2044</sup>

2038 MNL OL, DL 102 132

2039 MNL OL, DL 100 653.

2040 MNL OL, DF 261 897. He redeemed the charters "tum ex nostra voluntate et informacione tumque sua industria."

2041 MNL OL, DL 16 011.

2042 MNL OL, DF 255 802.

2043 The Rohfi were certainly in contact with Nicholas Székely, for before September 1479 they pledged their village of Glogovc to him: MNL OL, DL 107 041.

2044 Thallóczy–Horváth, *Alsó-szlavóniai okmánytár*, 218.

Kozora was not the only castle which came into the hands of Ladislav Roh in the 1470s. He also co-possessed for some time that of Berstyanovc as the guardian and protector of young Nicholas Tulbertfi, although it is not known by what right exactly he had assumed this guardianship.<sup>2045</sup> It was in all likelihood this same Ladislav who erected a *castellum* at Kutenya, first mentioned in 1470.<sup>2046</sup> In May 1472 he received a minor royal grant at the general assembly held at Buda.<sup>2047</sup> In May 1474 he was present, together with Stephen and John Roh, among the representatives of the Slavonian nobility at Körös, and he was one of the arbitrators between the counts of Blagaj and Zrin in the next year.<sup>2048</sup> Sometime before July 1476 he joined king Nicholas Újlaki, for at that time he is attested in his service at Jajce.<sup>2049</sup> In January 1481 he was among the jurors from the county of Körös elected for the congregation at Zagreb, even though he was also proscribed at the congregation for homicide, and at the same time he had to renounce his rights concerning Kozora in favour of the king.<sup>2050</sup> He was appointed as one of the collectors of the tax levied in the course of the congregation itself.<sup>2051</sup> Still at about the same time he was one of the Slavonian nobles who lent money to the king, presumably for his Styrian war.<sup>2052</sup> In 1483 he returned for a third time as viceban of Slavonia in the service of ban Matthias Geréb. He last occurs as such in May 1484, and left his office soon thereafter for reasons which remain unknown to us. In November of the next year he and his nephew, Bernard Roh committed a violent assault together with the *familiares* of Ladislav Egervári, which may indicate that they were both serving the latter then.<sup>2053</sup> Ladislav turns up for the last time in March 1486 as one of the arbitrators between Ladislav Hermanfi and the Kapitánfi brothers.<sup>2054</sup>

About the wives of Ladislav we know nothing but their names: in 1470 a certain Catherine is mentioned, whereas in 1491 his widow was called Scholastica.<sup>2055</sup> From one of them was born his only known son called Nicholas, who died before his father. Ladislav's brother, Michael died before November 1482. His only surviving son from his wife, Catherine Csopor, was

2045 MNL OL, DL 107 017: "egregiorum Nicolai filii quondam Tulberti de Berschyanowcz ac Ladislai Roh de Deche tutoris et protectoris eiusdem Nicolai;" *Levéltári Közlemények* 13 (1935): 244 (= DL 35 695): "cuius onera tutoris more ad presens gerimus."

2046 MNL OL, DF 255 820.

2047 HHStA, Erdődy 10 137.

2048 MNL OL, DL 33 150.

2049 MNL OL, DL 102 190.

2050 Tringli, "Szlavóniai közgyűlés," 317.

2051 Ibid., 307.

2052 MNL OL, DL 103 863.

2053 MNL OL, DL 32 833.

2054 MNL OL, DL 107 065.

2055 MNL OL, DF 255 820 (1470); *Levéltári Közlemények* 13 (1935): 251–52 (1491). See also DF 255 913. In 1490 Scholastica is involved in a violent trespass together with Balthasar Batthyány, which, of course, is not sufficient reason to count her as a relative of the latter.

Bernard, who consequently inherited the political authority of his uncle. In January 1490 he was listed among the Slavonian nobility assembled at Körös, and in June of the same year he was present at the diet of Pest convoked for the election of the new king.<sup>2056</sup> Later on his possessions were apparently occupied by duke Lawrence Újlaki, presumably during the civil war which followed the death of king Matthias.<sup>2057</sup> In March 1492 he was listed third, behind Balthasar Batthyány and Peter Bocskai, among the representatives of the Slavonian nobility at Buda. In the late summer of 1493 he was appointed, together with Louis Pekri, as Slavonian viceban by John Both and Emeric Derencsényi. He disappeared soon thereafter, presumably in the tragic battle fought with the invading Ottomans at Udbina, although as late as March 1495 his death was still not confirmed.<sup>2058</sup>

Bernard had been betrothed to Agnes, a niece of Thomas Bakóc. In view of the fact that his mother, Catherine was the cousin of Stephen Csupor, who had bequeathed his lands to the prelate, this marriage was evidently aimed on the long run to strengthen the domination of the Erdődi family in Slavonia. Bernard had left all his possessions to his wife and her uncle for the case of his heirless death, and so did his cousin, Matthias. Since the latter also died without leaving offspring before February 1497, all the Rohfi lands were indeed inherited by bishop Bakóc.<sup>2059</sup>

Not without some resistance, however. Alongside Matthias, Stephen Roh also had a daughter called Catherine from his wife, Euphrosyne. Prior to 1501 they started a case before the ban with reference to the fact that some at least of the Roh lands belonged to the female right (*jus femineum*), and as such they made part of their inheritance; their claim seems to have been appreciated, for in 1501 the estate of Podgorja at least was judged to them.<sup>2060</sup> Catherine married Peter Billyei, from the county of Baranya, who made a remarkable career under the Jagiellonian kings.<sup>2061</sup> In 1513 he received from the king the

2056 MNL OL, DF 252 107.

2057 MNL OL, DL 32 736. In his last will Stephen Csupor mentioned the sums that Bernard, the son of his sister, owned him "pro possessionibus suis:" *Levéltári Közlemények* 10 (1932): 127.

2058 MNL OL, DF 219 074: "in conflictu exercitus in regno nostro Croacie cum sevissimis Turcis totius Christianitatis inimicis facto periclitasset, de cuius vita et morte certitudo veritatis nemini constare dinosceretur."

2059 On all this see Fraknói, *Erdődi Bakócz Tamás* loc. cit. (see note 10 on p. 27); MNL OL, DF 219 074.

2060 MNL OL, DL 94 295. Unfortunately, only the last section of the charter has survived.

2061 1491–1493: alispán of Somogy (Iván Borsa, "Somogy középkori alispánjai. A Mohács előtti megyei archontológia ügye" [The Medieval Alispánok of Somogy County. The Problem of County Archontologies in Pre-Mohács Hungary], in *Somogy Megye Múltjából. Levéltári évkönyv* 13, ed. József Kanyar [Kaposvár: Somogy Megyei Levéltár, 1982], 13–14); 1498: castellan of Szabadka (Subotica, SRB) in the service of the Pongrác of Dengeleg (László Blazovich, "Szabadka földesurai a középkorban" [The Lords of Szabadka in the Middle Ages], in *Szabadka igazgatástörténetéből 1428–1918* [Chapters from the Administrative

possessions of his own wife, which Catherine forfeited to the crown because she had presented a forged charter in her suit against Peter Erdődi at the banal court.<sup>2062</sup> It is not known whether he ever took possession of any of the former Roh lands.

### 2.2.43. Stefekfi/Pan of Kravarina (Sthefekfy, Pan de Krawarina)

The Stefekfi/Szentandrás family apparently descended from a person called Stepk, whose sons acquired the land called Temenice, also known as Szentandrás,<sup>2063</sup> in the county of Garics, in 1277.<sup>2064</sup> A year later James, son of the same Stepk is referred to as a castle warrior of Garics.<sup>2065</sup> In fact, Stepk and his sons seem to have belonged to a populous castle warrior (*várjobbágy*) kindred from which the various branches of the Kamarjai family, as well as the Vidfi of Korbova and other less known noble families, which flourished in the region of Garics in the later middle ages, descended also.<sup>2066</sup> Most of these families remained firmly located in their native region throughout their existence, but some of them achieved some prominence which certainly justifies their inclusion in the present analysis.

The first member of the kindred to leave his native land and make a career was master Paul, son of Lawrence, and great-grandson of Stepk.<sup>2067</sup> After a period of service as a notary in the royal court, he rose to become the *secretarius notarius* of palatine Stephen Lackfi.<sup>2068</sup> Through his marriage, it

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History of Szabadka 1428–1918], ed. László Magyar and József Szabó (Szabadka: Pannon Press, 1996), 38); 1520: castellan of Visegrád (MNL OL, DL 94 342).

2062 MNL OL, DL 94 321. In October of the same year, after the death of Catherine, the king confirmed the donation in favour of Peter: DL 94 323.

2063 MNL OL, DL 100 805: “Zenthandras alio nomine Themennycze.”

2064 *Árpádkori Új Okmánytár*, vol. XII, 175.

2065 *Ibid.*, 200.

2066 The reconstruction of this family network would necessitate a research of its own, which cannot be done in the framework of the present book. Consequently, here I only indicate some of the information which underpin my hypothesis. As late as 1416 the Szentandrás and the Kamarjai are still termed as *fratres condivisionales*, both possessing at Kamarja and Szentandrás (*Zsigmondkori Oklevéltár*, vol. V, no. 2004). The same families, together with the Vidfi of Korbova, appear as the patrons of the Saint Martin parish church at Kamarja in 1408 (Lukinović, *Povijesni spomenici*, vol. V, 313); in fact, the latter appear to have descended from Vitus, son of James, son of Stepk, who turns up in 1347. In 1351 they were called “nobles of Garics” (MNL OL, DL 100 047), and in 1380, when the borders of Garics were rectified, and their possessions of Szentandrás and Kamarja menaced by incorporation, they managed to prove their title to them and were consequently confirmed therein by king Louis “sub mere et sincere nobilitatis prerogativa” (DL 100 173).

2067 MNL OL, DL 101 920: “Paulus litteratus filius Laurencii filii Iwachini de Zenthandras.” The village of Cuzmich mentioned in this charter was still among the appurtenances of Szentandrás in 1492 as Kuzmincz (DL 101 157).

2068 Bónis, *Jogtudó értelmiség*, 200. Bónis is wrong in attaching him to a várjobbágy kindred of the same name from the county of Zala.

seems, and also by royal donation, he acquired the estate of Újudvar, of which he and his descendants were called sometimes.<sup>2069</sup> Despite his evident affinity with Stephen Lackfi, during the troubled years after 1400 he not only remained faithful to Sigismund but also helped him actively in the service of ban Ladislás Fánics of Gordova. As a reward, he received the Ervencei lands, but he was apparently unable to obtain them effectively. He died before August 1406, leaving two sons, Nicholas and Stephen.<sup>2070</sup> Yet he was not the only one in his generation to leave Slavonia by way of service. The George son of James of Szentandrás, who is attested as castellan of Pécs in 1414, certainly belonged to the same family.<sup>2071</sup> Moreover, another kinsman of theirs, Stephen, son of James, became in the 1420s the deputy of Stephen Csupor, master of the doorkeepers in the queen's court.<sup>2072</sup> None of these offices was enough to lay the foundations for a further rise, however, and decline already set in during the second part of Sigismund's reign. One of the sons of Paul, Stephen, retained some of the authority of his father, for it was he who obtained the royal license to hold a fair at Újudvar,<sup>2073</sup> and probably erected a *castellum* at the same place.<sup>2074</sup> Yet his social capital seems to have been gradually undermined by the alienation of great parts of Újudvar to the Rohfi of Décsé by his own brother Nicholas,<sup>2075</sup> who, like their father, was literate, but operated on a purely local level.<sup>2076</sup> This alienation proved definitive, moreover, for, presumably during the upheaval after 1445, Újudvar was somehow occupied by John Vitovec, who in 1456 transferred it to Ladislás Hermanfi, who then possessed it until his death.

Although the son of Stephen, John, lost the estate of Újudvar and his landed wealth consequently became confined again to the appurtenances of Szentandrás/Temenice, he was at first sometimes called of the estate once acquired by his grandfather.<sup>2077</sup> Later on, however, he was constantly referred to as Stefekfi after the ancestor of the family, and as of Temenice, where by the

2069 On his land acquisitions see *ibid.*, 201, n. 68, with all the references. Újudvari: *Zsigmondkori Oklevéltár*, vol. VI, nos. 204, 908.

2070 MNL OL, DL 103 412 = *Zsigmondkori Oklevéltár*, vol. II/1, no. 4937.

2071 *Zsigmondkori Oklevéltár*, vol. V, no. 2004. Castellan: Engel, *Archontológia*, vol. I, 390. The previous incumbent of the office, Thomas Cigány of (Berivoj)szentiván, is also listed among the patrons of the Saint Martin parish church at Kamarja in 1402 (Lukinović, *Povijesni spomenici*, vol. V, 165.)

2072 Engel, *Archontológia*, vol. I, 61. He is surely identical with the James son of Stephen mentioned in *Zsigmondkori Oklevéltár*, vol. V, no. 2004.

2073 MNL OL, DL 103 600: "contra [...] donacionem et libertatem domini nostri imperatoris super eundem forum eidem Stephano attributum."

2074 First mentioned in 1429: MNL OL, DL 43 777.

2075 See the previous chapter.

2076 Lawyer in 1430: MNL OL, DL 106 960.

2077 MNL OL, DL 100 607: "Johanne filio Stephek de Wyudwar"; DL 100 805: "Johannem filium Stephani filii Pauli literati de Wywdwar."

1470s he erected a *castellum* of his own.<sup>2078</sup> About the career of John not much is known. In 1463 he is referred to as a royal man,<sup>2079</sup> and somewhat later he joined the service of John, bishop of Pécs, among whose *familiares* he was proscribed in 1481.<sup>2080</sup> In 1475 he was already listed among the men of bishop Oswald of Zagreb;<sup>2081</sup> in 1480 he turns up in an arbitration,<sup>2082</sup> and a year later we find him among the jurors of Körös at the assembly of Zagreb.<sup>2083</sup> He married the daughter of Tulbert of Berstyanóc, widow of Michael Latk.<sup>2084</sup> It is evident that he enjoyed considerable prestige, for he was constantly titled *egregius*.<sup>2085</sup> He died sometime before 1488.<sup>2086</sup>

Although in 1477 a son called Stanislas was also mentioned, the surviving heir of John was called Gabriel, and was born from Catherine Tulbert.<sup>2087</sup> He also died heirless before 1492, however, and it is at this point that the history of another family, that of the Pan of Kravarina, comes into the picture. In 1492 king Wladislaw donated the *castellum* of Szentandrás, already called Szerencsi (*Serenchy*, *Serencze*), with appurtenances in fourteen villages, all of them on the territory of Szentandrás and Kamarja, to two of his courtiers, Balthasar Batthyány and Peter Butkai.<sup>2088</sup> Yet their introduction early in the next year was impeded by the contradiction of Catherine Tulbert, and also of duke

2078 The *castellum* is mentioned together with three similar fortifications in Hungary by the decree of May 1472, all four to be demolished. Franciscus Döry, Georgius Bónis, Geisa Érszegi and Susanna Teke, eds., *Decreta Regni Hungariae. Gesetze und Verordnungen Ungarns 1458–1490* (Budapest: Akadémiai, 1989), 206. Eventually it was not destroyed, or was rebuilt soon afterwards, as we will see later.

2079 MNL OL, DF 255 767.

2080 Tringli, "Szlavóniai közgyűlés," 316.

2081 MNL OL, DF 261 839.

2082 MNL OL, DL 100 942.

2083 Tringli, "Szlavóniai közgyűlés," 314.

2084 MNL OL, DL 100 889.

2085 MNL OL, DL 103 699; DL 100 835; DL 100 889; DL 100 891.

2086 MNL OL, DL 46 090. It is interesting to observe that the distant kinsman of John, John Vidfi of Korbova, who, as mentioned above, descended from the same male ancestor, produced a similar rise in the second half of the fifteenth century; although never titled *egregius*, he certainly enjoyed some more than average local esteem. He started his career as szolgabíró of Körös, an office in which he seems to have spent three terms (*Zsigmondkori Oklevéltár*, vol. X, nos. 541, 587, vol. XI, nos. 441, 619, MNL OL, DL 44 351, DL 103 689), and in the 1440s he was twice Slavonian envoy to the general assembly at Buda (Teleki, *Hunyadiak kora*, vol. X, 120; Béla Radvánszky and Levente Závodszy, eds., *A Héderváry család oklevéltára* [Charters of the Héderváry Family], vol I of 2 (Budapest: n.p., 1909–1922), 251). He married the daughter of Paul Garázda of Keresztúr, whereby he acquired portions in the Garázda lands as well (MNL OL, DL 15 200). In 1470 he was already acting, together with Anthony Kopinci, in the name of the entire Slavonian nobility (DF 268 072), and four years later he was one of the envoys delegated to the king by them (Kukuljević, *Iura regni*, part II, 211–12). He also emerges as an arbitrator elected by Ladislas Hermanfi (MNL OL, DF 252 063), and as a member of the Slavonian assembly in 1478.

2087 MNL OL, DL 100 891 (Stanislas); DL 101 157 (Gabriel).

2088 MNL OL, DL 101 145.



Lawrence Újlaki, although we ignore the grounds on which the latter intervened.<sup>2089</sup> Behind the widow there stood her brother, Nicholas Tulbertfi who, although under the pretext of securing the rights of his sister, evidently aimed at retaining the estate for himself.<sup>2090</sup> In the end, however, it was not Nicholas Tulbertfi but the new husband of Catherine, called Paul Pan of Kravarina, who took hold of the estate precisely through his marriage with the widow.<sup>2091</sup>

In all probability, Kravarina had once belonged to the estate of Dobrakucsá, and was presumably alienated from it sometime during the 1470s, when the Nelepec lost much of their inherited lands, as we have seen above.<sup>2092</sup> How the Pan family obtained it, and where they came from, is a rather more obscure story, however. The inquiry into their origins is made possible by the joint mention among the owners of Kravarina, in 1507 and 1517, of Francis Pan and Nicholas Ebeni.<sup>2093</sup> The Slavic name Pan was very frequent in the fifteenth century, yet there was only one village called Eben in medieval Hungary, in the county of Pilis.<sup>2094</sup> Along this line it is relatively easy to identify the families concerned: in 1518 we learn that Francis was the son of Paul, himself the son of Peter Pan of Báté, whose daughter, Elisabeth was married by George Ebeni, and his son called Nicholas.<sup>2095</sup> The village called Báté (today Százhalombatta) likewise lay in the county of Pilis,<sup>2096</sup> so the question remains of how they were relocated to the distant county of Körös.

In fact, the joint names of Pan and Báté are so unique that we have every reason to identify the Peter Pan of Báté with the alispán of Pozsega of exactly the same name who turns up in our sources between 1464 and 1469.<sup>2097</sup> Since he was the *familiaris* of Emeric Hédervári, in 1464 his castellan of Pozsegavár, it is evident that it was in the service of the son of the late palatine that he had arrived to Pozsega. As the successor of Hédervári in the ispánság of Pozsega was John Ernusz, <sup>2098</sup> it is probable that Peter joined him and received from

2089 MNL OL, DL 101 168.

2090 MNL OL, DL 101 202.

2091 MNL OL, DL 101 242.

2092 In 1523 Francis Nelepeci maintained that the possessions of Gradec and Kravarina were transferred “dudum a progenitoribus ipsius Francisci Nelepeczy similiter progenitoribus dicti alterius Francisci Pan vigore certarum litterarum superinde confectarum pro certa summa pecuniarum partim pignoris partim vero perpetuitatis titulis.” MNL OL, DF 265 881. See also DF 277 175/259–61 *ecw*.

2093 Adamček–Kampuš, *Popisi*, 30, 98.

2094 István Tringli, “Pest megye a késő középkorban” [The County of Pest in the Late Middle Ages], in *Pest megye monográfiája I/2. A honfoglalástól 1686-ig* [The Monography of Pest County from the Beginning to 1686], ed. Attila Zsoldos (Budapest: Pest Megye Monográfia Közalapítvány, 2001), 92–93.

2095 MNL OL, DL 106 083/232–33 *ecw*, where it appears that they also possessed parts of the village Székely.

2096 Tringli, “Pest megye,” 153.

2097 MNL OL, DL 33 506, DL 34 216, DL 108 315 (“Petrus Pan de Bathe”).

2098 MNL OL, DL 45 579.

his new lord the estate of Kravarina after Ernuszt had occupied Dobrakucsá. The first trace of their actually owning Kravarina comes from 1481, when the wife of Peter Pan of Kravarina was proscribed at the congregation of Zagreb.<sup>2099</sup> It was thus the son of this Peter, called Paul Pan, who married the widow of John Stefekfi and consequently occupied the estate of Temenice.<sup>2100</sup> In 1495 both Kravarina and Temenice were listed under his name, together with almost sixty inhabited tenant plots.<sup>2101</sup>

In fact, Paul Pan and Nicholas Tulbertfi seem for some time to have held Temenice together,<sup>2102</sup> but the former was forced to defend his position before the law against Balthasar Batthyány and Peter Butkai.<sup>2103</sup> Although Paul managed to remain in the possession of the estate until 1498, he may have felt himself too weak to survive there and transferred the Stefekfi lands to Nicholas Bánfi before October 1499.<sup>2104</sup> In the meantime the estate had been divided by the palatine between the grantees of 1492 and Ladislás son of Peter of Szentandrás, who had intervened in the case as a *frater aviticus* of the late John Stefekfi, but Paul soon alienated again the whole of Temenice together with the *castellum* there to Bartholomew Beriszló, prior of Vrana.<sup>2105</sup> In 1503 Wladislaw II donated again the half of Szentandrás, this time as having escheated to the crown by the heirless death of Ladislás Szentandrási, to Balthasar Batthyány,<sup>2106</sup> and the latter indeed seized it before 1517 at the latest.<sup>2107</sup> What happened to the other half is not known; what is certain is that the Pan of Kravarina never returned there any more.

This does not mean that they disappeared from the history of Slavonia, however. Although the available information is extremely limited, it seems that the son of Paul, Francis, was for some time in royal service.<sup>2108</sup> In 1517 his lands in Körös were exempted *ad rationem domini bani*, which proves that at that time he was employed by Peter Beriszló.<sup>2109</sup> In 1522 he was already castellan of Monoszló in the service of Peter Erdődi.<sup>2110</sup> One more person should also be mentioned in this context, although his exact relationship with the Pan cannot be established: Francis Ebeni was castellan of Sümeg (Veszprém

2099 Tringli, "Szlavóniai közgyűlés," 316.

2100 MNL OL, DL 101 206.

2101 Adamček-Kampuš, *Popisi*, 10.

2102 MNL OL, DL 106 868.

2103 MNL OL, DL 101 257.

2104 MNL OL, DL 101 269.

2105 MNL OL, DL 101 334.

2106 MNL OL, DL 101 339.

2107 Adamček-Kampuš, *Popisi*, 100.

2108 The only reference we have is in the letter of his father, in which the latter advised him to proceed in the defence of their lands "ita quod servicia regie maiestatis non amittatis:" MNL OL, DF 288 098. What the nature of these services was is not known.

2109 Adamček-Kampuš, *Popisi*, 98.

2110 MNL OL, DL 25 657.

c.) in the service of bishop Peter Beriszló;<sup>2111</sup> he was evidently related to the Nicholas Ebeni who descended from Peter Pan on his mother's side, and owned portions of Kravarina.<sup>2112</sup> Since the Beriszló family appears also to have acquired portions of Kravarina, it is probable that Francis was taken by his lord from Slavonia to the distant county of Veszprém.<sup>2113</sup>

#### 2.2.44. Szász of Tamasovc (Zaaz de Thamasowcz)

The Szász of Tamasovc family descended from the Gatal kindred, whose possessions originally lay in the county of Sopron. Some of its members came very early to Slavonia, however, and founded there the village of Gatalóc and the noble family which bore its name.<sup>2114</sup> The branch which later became that of Tamasovc remained in the north-western part of Hungary until 1388, when Matthias son of Nicholas was deprived of his estate of Endréd (Sopron c.) for his having been involved in the attack against queens Elizabeth and Mary in 1386.<sup>2115</sup> His mere participation in the revolt of the Horváti brothers proves that he had some earlier contacts with either of its leaders, and we will soon return to their possible roots. Yet he apparently was still unpossessed in Slavonia when he joined ban Detre Bebek, and received as his *familiaris* from king Sigismund the estate of Tamasovc, in the vicinity of Racsá and Megyericse, in the county of Körös in 1396.<sup>2116</sup>

2111 MNL OL, DF 262 167.

2112 Adamček–Kampuš, *Popisi*, 98.

2113 I regard the Nicolaus Desew who is listed among the owners of Kravarina in 1517 as a member of the Beriszló family.

2114 Engel, *Középkori magyar genealógia*, Gatal nem tamasóci (endrédi) Szász. This Gatalóc, which lay in the county of Körös (Csánki, *Körösmegye*, 86, Adamček–Kampuš, *Popisi*, 7), should be carefully distinguished from the village of the same name in Varasd. Unfortunately, the exact descent of the Gatalóci family which lived in the county of Körös cannot be reconstructed. Pál Engel (loc. cit.) thought that they may have descended from the master Ladislás who turns up in 1335 with regard to the possession of Racsica(szentistván), yet this hypothesis cannot be proved. What is certain is that the Gatalóci who lived in the county of Körös in the fifteenth century, unlike the Gatalóci of Varasd, belonged to the petty nobility, and the highest office they assumed was that of *szolgabíró*; in any case, none of them was ever titled *egregius*. The only exception was Matthias Gatalóci, son of Gregory, bishop of Vác and then of Veszprém, and arch-chancellor. He certainly belonged to the Gatalóci of Körös (his father is probably identical with the Gregory son of Benedict who turns up in 1399; yet see Bónis, *Jogtudó értelmiség*, 107, who makes him descend from the Gatalóci of Varasd), but his career involved no social consequences for his kinsmen. Nor can be established any link between the Tamasovci and the Gatalóci, despite their supposedly common origins; I have consequently left the latter out of consideration.

2115 *Zsigmondkori Oklevéltár*, vol. I, no. 534.

2116 MNL OL, DL 87 756: "possessionem nostram Thamasouch vocatam in districtu Racha existentem." The introduction was carried out by a knight of the court, Lawrence Tót, which certainly indicates the prestige of the grantee.

Somewhat later he adroitly shifted his allegiance and joined Nicholas Garai sometime before 1398.<sup>2117</sup> Thanks to this choice, he profited from the revolt of 1403 by acquiring new possessions confiscated on grounds of infidelity in the county of Körös. He was thus donated as a *miles egregius* portions in the Kamarcai estates,<sup>2118</sup> as well as parts of Klokocsovc.<sup>2119</sup> He also appears to have erected a *castellum* on one of the appurtenances of Tamasovc.<sup>2120</sup> It was thanks to his marriage that he obtained the possession of Kretin (Krajetin) likewise in Körös. His wife was the daughter of Lanceus Szigeti, member of a well-to-do noble family from the county of Somogy, himself a court knight under Louis I. Indeed, it was probably his very marriage with Helen Szigeti which paved the way for master Matthias to Slavonia. Both Lanceus and his brother Antimus functioned as alispán of Sopron in the early 1360s, and it must have been then that they acquainted themselves with Matthias. Later on John, son of Antimus became first castellan of Vrana and later viceban of Slavonia in the service of Nicholas Garai, and presumably played a dominant role in Matthias's joining his lord at that time. The fact that another cousin, Stephen Szigeti had served ban John Horváti as his alispán of Baranya in the late 1370s may also account for the participation of Matthias in the coup of 1386.<sup>2121</sup>

In 1405 Matthias was sent by his lord to the distant county of Torontál and appointed as castellan in the important castle of Becse (Bečej, SRB).<sup>2122</sup> He died before 22 January 1408, in the midst of preparations for a new campaign to Serbia.<sup>2123</sup> After his death his two sons, Ladislás and John were put under the tutelage of John Antimus, who in the meantime had been appointed as deputy palatine by Nicholas Garai. Only five years later, however, John Szász is attested as one of the participants of the expedition sent against duke Hrvoje, among the followers of John Garai, brother of the palatine.<sup>2124</sup> He appears to have remained faithful to the Garai family, for later became alispán of Bodrog county in the service of Ladislás, son of palatine Nicholas.<sup>2125</sup> That he still enjoyed considerable prestige locally is borne out by the fact that among the arbitrators called upon to settle his quarrel with Benedict Nelepeci we find, among others, Sigismund Kasztellánfi, Stephen Fánecs, James Garázda

2117 Lukinović, *Povijesni spomenici*, vol. V, 80: "strenui et nobilis viri magistri Mathie Zaz fidelis familiaris nostri."

2118 MNL OL, DF 230 834. As late as September 1430 he was still in litigation with the sons of Peter Vitéz: DL 103 544.

2119 *Zsigmondkori Oklevéltár*, vol. VI, no. 2370.

2120 *Ibid.*, vol. II/2, no. 6285; no. 6889: "castellum in dicta villa Otrochauch situm."

2121 Engel, *Archontológia*, vol. II, 13–14, 231.

2122 *Ibid.*, vol. I, 275.

2123 *Zsigmondkori Oklevéltár*, vol. I, no. 5920.

2124 *Ibid.*, vol. IV, no. 964.

2125 Engel, *Archontológia*, vol. I, 116.

and Frank Megyericsei.<sup>2126</sup> He died sometime before 1449, whereas his brother Ladislás disappeared much earlier.

After the death of John the position of the family deteriorated rapidly. His widow, Sophie married Ambrose Petneházi, who must have been brought to Slavonia by governor John Hunyadi, and thus became the stepfather of young Emeric Szász, only son of the late John.<sup>2127</sup> Whether this marriage played any role in the subsequent long series of pledges which definitively undermined the family's social standing is impossible to tell. Already before 1460 Emeric pledged the possession of Tamasovc together with its appurtenances to a person called Valentine Magnus of Kemlékallya, but in this case he proved able to redeem his property.<sup>2128</sup> Before 1461 he also pledged his possession of Kretin for two hundred florins to Anthony Kopinci, and in that year he borrowed a further sum of 60 florins against the same piece of property.<sup>2129</sup> Later on his portions in Klokocsovcshentmiklós, Oliverc and Plavnica were assigned to Peter Gudovci, and so were his possessions of Tamasovc and Kretin "by virtue of a certain contract."<sup>2130</sup> In 1481 he pledged two peasant plots to a neighbouring nobleman, whereas in 1486 he mortgaged two entire villas for 132 florins.<sup>2131</sup> A year later he apparently intended to alienate his remaining portions on Tamasovc and Kretin to duke Lawrence Újlaki and his sister for all, but this time his son, John intervened and protested against the deal.<sup>2132</sup> The only known element in the career of Emeric is that in 1475 he was in the service of bishop Oswald of Zagreb.<sup>2133</sup>

Emeric married several times, and one of his wives was called Margaret.<sup>2134</sup> They were both proscribed in 1481, Emeric for homicide.<sup>2135</sup> It is possible that either Emeric himself or his father married a member of the Matucsinaí family from the county of Baranya, for in 1479 Emeric is said to have together with Sigismund and Nicholas Matucsinaí a common castellan in the castle of Matucsina.<sup>2136</sup> Emeric drafted his last will on 21 August 1489 in the episcopal

2126 MNL OL, DL 43 730.

2127 MNL OL, DL 44 768, DF 255 731.

2128 MNL OL, DF 218 869.

2129 MNL OL, DF 231 441.

2130 MNL OL, DF 218 978.

2131 MNL OL, DF 231 783.

2132 MNL OL, DF 231 786. In another charter issued in the same year, however, he indeed pledged his possession of Tamasovc to the duke, in the name of his son and his daughters, before the chapter of Pozsega (DF 275 088).

2133 MNL OL, DF 261 839.

2134 The last wife of Emeric was said in his testament to have been the widow of John Zelna ("ultima coniux mea que fuit relicta quondam Johannis Zelna"). I was unable to identify him.

2135 Tringli, "Szlavóniai közgyűlés," 316, as "Emericum de Zazowcz."

2136 MNL OL, DL 70 048: "egregii Sigismundus et Nicolaus Chir dicti de Mathuchina ac Emericus Zaz de Thamasowcz missis et destinatis Georgio de Kereskez et Sigismundo castellanis dicti castri ipsorum Mathuchina." It seems more probable that it was John Szász who married from the Matucsinaí family. The Matucsinaí mostly possessed in the county

palace of Csázma, and died soon afterwards. Curiously enough, in his testament he made no mention at all of his son, John, but commissioned Ladislás Nyári to dispose of all his goods, and even asked him to marry off one of his daughters. The latter Ladislás was then a leading *familiaris* of bishop Oswald of Zagreb, which at least explains why Emeric prepared his last will at Csázma.<sup>2137</sup> Indeed, in 1490 it was Ladislás Nyári who was required to hand out the filial quarter to the two daughters of Emeric, whose sister, Veronica, was then the wife of Emeric Megyericsi.<sup>2138</sup>

Whereas Emeric Szász was still occasionally titled *egregius*,<sup>2139</sup> his son, John, apparently never received the title, and almost nothing is known about his activities. He continued to hold parts of Tamasovc and Szászovc (Zazowcz, apparently called as such after the family name, today as Sasovac, CRO), together with a certain Peter Fekete of Szászovc, who was probably not related to him.<sup>2140</sup> This Peter was szolgabíró of Körös in 1516–18 and then again from 1520 to 1524.<sup>2141</sup> In 1503 Peter, still called of Komosovc, represented the son of John, Ladislás, and Apollonia, who was the daughter of Emeric Megyericsi and Veronica Szász, before the ban, and, although there is no proof of it, he may have acquired Szászovc by marriage thereafter.<sup>2142</sup> John was already dead at that time, and his son Ladislás also disappeared soon, for in 1507 Szászovc was already possessed by Peter Fekete and Michael Tompa, and in 1513 by Peter Fekete alone.<sup>2143</sup>

#### 2.2.45. Szencsei (de Zenche, Zempchey, Svetački)

The Szencsei family was one of the most illustrious and their history perhaps the most eventful during the long centuries of their existence. No surprise, then, that it is the only Slavonian noble family which found its historian in the person of Vjekoslav Klaić.<sup>2144</sup> Albeit far from exhaustive, the long article of the

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of Baranya, but also had some land in that of Bodrog, where John Szász was alispán. It is worth remarking that Ladislás Petykei, who followed John Szász as alispán of Bodrog, also married from the Matucsinaí family. See Engel, *Archontológia*, vol. I, 116, and idem, *Középkori Magyar Genealógia*, Matucsinaí (Cseményi).

2137 MNL OL, DF 275 069. Ladislás Nyári “director negotiorum reverendissimi in Christo patris et domini [...] Osvaldi episcopi ecclesie Zagrabiensis:” DF 268 047.

2138 MNL OL, DF 255 907.

2139 MNL OL, DF 231 441, DF 275 088, and see also the charter cited in the preceding note.

2140 DF 275 023.

2141 MNL OL, DF 219 257, DF 219 373, DF 219 285, Borsá, *Balassa család levéltára*, no. 533, MNL OL, DF 276 785, DL 101 566, DF 219 350. He may have held the office without a break, anyway.

2142 MNL OL, DL 94 634.

2143 Adamček–Kampuš, *Popisi*, 32, 62.

2144 Klaić, “Plemići Svetački.” Very recently, a book has been devoted to the Kasztellánfi as well, though not in the form of a proper narrative. See section on the Kasztellánfi.



great Croatian historian is still useful for the early section of the family's history; but it is in need of a profound revision as regards the period following 1400.

The family descended from *comes* Theobaldus, of German origins, who is attested as one of the leading men of the realm during the reign of king Coloman. Klaić seems to have been right in supposing that it was this Theobaldus who held the office of ban for some time, for during the thirteenth century even those branches of the family wrote themselves *de genere Tybold bani* who were evidently collateral relatives of the later Tibolds.<sup>2145</sup> Yet the first member of the family from whom their descent can be reconstructed with relative certainty is comes Budur who lived in the first third of the thirteenth century. Budur had six sons, who divided their extensive estates in 1231.<sup>2146</sup> Not counting their possessions north of the Drava, these lands spread in a wide stretch from the river Sava deep into the heart of Körös county, and were probably only comparable in size to those owned by the Tétény kindred.<sup>2147</sup>

Those among the six branches descended from the sons of comes Budur which owned land in Somogy seem to have disappeared by the early fourteenth century, and together with them their estates north of the Drava river.<sup>2148</sup> Moreover, all members of the Szencsei family mentioned in the

2145 Whereas Karácsonyi (*Magyar nemzetségek*, 1008) identifies with Tibold I or II the ban after whom the members of the kindred were called “*de genere Thiboldi bani*,” according to the more probable hypothesis of Klaić (“*Plemići Svetački*,” 7) the ban was the Tibold comes who lived in the time of king Coloman. Somewhat awkwardly, Karácsonyi does not even mention this latter Tibold, unlike Gyula Pauler, who unequivocally originates the kindred from Tibold (Theobald), ispán of Somogy in the twelfth century (Gyula Pauler, *A magyar nemzet története az Árpád-házi királyok alatt* [The History of the Hungarian Nation under the Kings of the Árpád Dynasty], vol I of 2 (Budapest: Athenaeum, 1899), 407).

2146 Karácsonyi, *Magyar nemzetségek*, 1008.

2147 On their lands see Klaić, “*Plemići Svetački*,” 18–19.

2148 Karácsonyi, *Magyar nemzetségek*, 1011. In 1294, when the sons of Cosmas and Theobald divided the lands they had acquired since 1231, Zerie and Demetrius, the sons of Cosmas, received the villages of Som and Kapurév in the northeastern corner of Somogy county. In the 1350s we find at Som a person called Demetrius son of Demetrius of Som, who was most probably the grandson of Cosmas (Iván Borsa: “A somogyi konvent oklevelei az Országos Levéltárban” [The Charters of the Convent of Somogy in the Hungarian National Archives], 4. közlemény: 1351–1370, in Sándor Bósze ed., *Somogy Megye Múltjából. Levéltári évkönyv* 29 (Kaposvár: Somogy Megyei Levéltár, 1998), no. 266). The next person to emerge at Som is Andrew of Som, in the next generation, from whom the late medieval Somi family descended (Engel, *Középkori Magyar Genealógia*, Somi). Although there is no certain link between Demetrius and Andrew, in view of the fact that both owned the single village of Som (Kapurév had disappeared during the fourteenth century), it is at least possible that the Somi family (from which the famous ispán of Temes, Joseph Somi originated) can also be linked to the Tibold kindred. Unfortunately, on the basis of the known Somi coat of arms this hypothesis cannot be underpinned, for both Joseph Somi and his son, Caspar, had lilies carved into their seals, apparently because Joseph's wife came from the Imrefy family of the Győr kindred. Of course, this can be explained by the fact that their descent from the Tibold had already gone into oblivion by the late fifteenth century.

fourteenth and fifteenth centuries appear to have been the descendants of comes Tibold, son of Budur, although the reconstruction of their exact genealogy is still hindered by the lack of sources.<sup>2149</sup> Among the grandsons of Tibold, Lőkös (*Lewkus*) and John, sons of John remained faithful to king Charles I in the years of disturbance and were accordingly rewarded in 1322 by the king who exempted their lands from the marten tax. Yet their cousin, John, son of Nicholas was for some reason captivated by the king and was consequently obliged to pledge some of his lands to make money after his liberation. Paul, son of Mihalc likewise confronted king Charles before 1330. In the autumn of 1327<sup>2150</sup> we still find him together with his brother Nicholas among the followers of ban Mikcs at the siege of the castle of Szenticsnyák, but somewhat later he turned against the king, and, shutting himself up in the castle of Szaplónca, committed “innumerable sorts of evil” to the detriment of the king’s supporters. Later he was captured and allegedly killed by a thunderbolt in his prison. His brother, Nicholas handed over Szaplónca to the king and was accordingly pardoned together with his son and nephews.<sup>2151</sup>

In 1343 Lőkös and Kakas divided their estates, which already boasted the castle of Fejérvár.<sup>2152</sup> Lőkös was castellan of the royal castle of Lipovec in the 1340s.<sup>2153</sup> The sons of Nicholas, son of Mihalc were again convicted of infidelity together with their father before 1378, although in this case the reason is unknown.<sup>2154</sup> Yet the worst was still to come during the first tumultuous years of king Sigismund’s reign. Nothing is known about the family’s eventual role in the political troubles which followed the death of Louis I in 1382. Early in 1389, however, Sigismund ordered John, son of George and the other John, son of Tibold to join Albert Losonci, prior of Vrana and march against the rebels in Croatia.<sup>2155</sup> But less than three months later, in May 1389 a third member of the family, Tibold son of Desiderius (Desew) was already sentenced

2149 The chief problem is presented by the branch of Mihalc, which belonged beyond any doubt to the Tibold kindred. Karácsonyi thought that the father of Mihalc was either Petke or Thomas, probably the former, for the name Petke seemed to him a diminutive of Peter, which was frequently used among the descendants of Mihalc. Klaić, on the other hand, referring to a charter still unknown to Karácsonyi, which enumerates the two sons of Petke, Grab and Demetrius, left unsolved the problem of “which among the six sons of Budur was the father of Mihalc.” The proposal of Karácsonyi, according to which Petke may have been the father of Mihalc seems improbable not only in view of the charter referred to by Klaić, but also because at the partition of 1231 Petke was given no portion in the estate of Szencse, whereas the descendants of Mihalc were constantly called of Szencse and did possess a part of it. The problem cannot be solved for the time being.

2150 In this year he is also attested as ispán of Gerzence: Engel, *Archontológia*, vol. I, 252.

2151 On the history of the family in the Angevin period see Klaić, “Plemići Svetački,” 12–18.; Karácsonyi: *Magyar nemzetségek*, 1010–11.

2152 Klaić, “Plemići Svetački,” 18–19.

2153 Engel, *Archontológia*, vol. I, 361.

2154 Smičiklas, *Codex diplomaticus*, vol. XV, 404–05.

2155 MNL OL, DL 7484. The letter is only known in a late copy.

for infidelity that he had committed by joining John Palisnai, and his possessions were donated to Ladislás Kasztellánfi.<sup>2156</sup> Moreover, in 1392 John, son of George likewise suffered the punishment for infidelity and was deprived of his landed wealth for having joined the rebel prior of Vrana; so either the king was not well informed at the time of his order sent to the two Szencsei in February 1389, or John joined Sigismund's enemies afterwards.<sup>2157</sup> John son of Tibold seems this time to have remained faithful to Sigismund, but was unable to avoid the fate of his kinsmen in 1402. Nevertheless, he either had more luck or more influential patrons at court, for he managed to obtain the royal grace shortly after the suppression of the revolt, and even to regain most of his possessions which had already been granted away to the Kasztellánfi.<sup>2158</sup> In view of the possible dangers facing him he could judge himself a lucky man despite the fact that he had definitively lost the important estate of Szircs, and that the Kasztellánfi posed henceforth a constant danger by laying claim upon all the remaining Szencsei estates.

We have much less information about the descendants of Mihalc. Paul, son of Nicholas joined already during the reign of Louis I Nicholas Garai the elder, and became first his castellan of Óvár and later his deputy-palatine. After the accession of Sigismund he followed his lord to Croatia and was appointed as his viceban there.<sup>2159</sup> After 1402, however, when he is for the last time attested as a member of the court, there is no trace of either Paul himself or of his offspring if he had any. Other members of his branch did have children, for in 1378 we have what seems to be a complete list of the members of the Szencsei family then alive. Here, alongside John son of Tibold, Ladislás Kakas, Tibold son of Desiderius and John son of George, we find Adam son of John, Fabian and Emeric sons of Paul, and George, James, Peter and Nicholas sons of Stephen, who all appear to have descended from Mihalc.<sup>2160</sup> The latter Stephen is surely identical with the Stephen son of Nicholas referred to in 1366,<sup>2161</sup> and his father was most probably Nicholas son of Peter.<sup>2162</sup> What is really difficult to account for is that consequently the members of the Mihalc branch almost completely disappear from our sources, and when they reappear again in the middle of the fifteenth century – if, indeed, it is really they who reappear –, it is not possible any more to establish their exact relationship to their forbears in the last third of the fourteenth century. Whatever the situation, it is sure that in the 1400s the descendants of Mihalc, although their involvement in the political upheaval before 1403 cannot be

2156 Smičiklas, *Codex diplomaticus*, vol. XVII, 200.

2157 Ibid., vol. XVII, 421–23.

2158 MNL OL, DF 230 833.

2159 Engel, *Archontológia*, vol. II, 225.

2160 Smičiklas, *Codex diplomaticus*, vol. XV, 397.

2161 Ibid., vol. XIII, 578.

2162 The absence of his other son, Paul from the list is explained by the fact that at this time he was already away from Slavonia in the service of Nicholas Garai.

documented, lost their previous social position and were clearly pushed to the background by the branch of Tibold, son of Budur. The reconstruction of the exact descent of the latter, however, illustrates all the difficulties that a historian of the family, and of all contemporary non-baronial families, for that matter, is forced to confront due to the peculiar nature of the sources.

Among the descendants of Tibold the first to assume a political role after the consolidation was Ladislás, son of John, son of Tibold (son of Lőkös). In 1417 he assumed office as ispán of Zagreb in the service of ban David Lack,<sup>2163</sup> and it would be logical to suppose, as did Pál Engel, that it was he who later joined one of the new pillars of king Sigismund's regime, count Hermann of Cilli and served him as his viceban of Slavonia for more than eight years. [March 1427 – August 1435].<sup>2164</sup> Yet things are a lot more complicated, as we will see below. What is sure is that this Ladislás, grandson of Tibold, joined ban Matko Tallóci in the 1430s and was appointed as his castellan of Jajce in Bosnia.<sup>2165</sup> This Ladislás Szencsei married the daughter of viceban Andrew Rohonci, called Catherine, who bore him a son, Ladislás junior, and two daughters, Barbara and Anne.<sup>2166</sup> Ladislás son of John is still alive in April 1448, and is first mentioned as dead in 1452.<sup>2167</sup>

Vjekoslav Klaić supposed that Ladislás son of John had three sons, Christopher, John and Ladislás, and was thus the ancestor of all future members of the Szencsei family.<sup>2168</sup> At first glance the Croatian historian seems to have been right, for a prohibition made before the chapter of Pozsega in 1443 does mention these three sons of *one* Ladislás.<sup>2169</sup> A charter of 1456 likewise refers to a John son of Ladislás and a Ladislás son of the same Ladislás.<sup>2170</sup> Yet in this latter case the terminology can be said to be at least clumsy in case John and Ladislás were indeed brothers. Other, more convincing sources plainly exclude the possibility of this brotherhood, however. In 1442 we meet together Ladislás son of John, son of Tibold of Szencse and John, son of the *late* Ladislás son of John of the other Szencse [*de alia Zenche*], and Christopher is said to be the *carnalis* brother of John alone.<sup>2171</sup> Consequently,

2163 Engel, *Archontológia*, vol. I, 259.

2164 It is interesting that Klaić does not mention the long vicebanatus of Ladislás Szencsei at all.

2165 Engel, *Archontológia*, vol. I, 332.

2166 1421: *Zsigmondkori Oklevéltár*, vol. VIII, no. 1161; 1428: Lukinović, *Povijesni spomenici*, vol. VI, 253; 1452: MNL OL, DL 101 749.

2167 MNL OL, DL 101 749.

2168 Klaić, "Plemići Svetački," 27.

2169 Thallóczy–Horváth, *Alsó-szlavóniai okmánytár*, 173–74: "Cristoforum, Johannem, Ladislaum filios Ladislai de Zenche."

2170 MNL OL, DL 106 834: "egregius Johannes filius quondam Ladislai de Zenche," and "Ladisláus filius similiter eiusdem Ladislai de Zenche."

2171 Inquisition upon the complaint "Ladislai filii Johannis filii Tibaldi de Zenche et Ladislai filii sui de eadem", "Johannes filius quondam Ladislai filii Johannis de alia Zenche, ex commissione et voluntate Cristofori fratris sui carnalis" commits violent trespass: MNL OL, DF 255 717.

the father of John cannot be the same as Ladislav son of John, son of Tibold, and John and Ladislav junior could not be brothers. The value of this charter is clearly enhanced by the fact that its source was Ladislav son of John himself, for we have good reason to suppose that he had fairly exact information about his own family. In 1448 Ladislav son of John, son of Tibold and John, son of the *late* Ladislav of the same Szencse protest together against a third party,<sup>2172</sup> which again is a strong argument on behalf of the theory that one has to count with at least two persons called Ladislav within the branch of Tibold in the first half of the fifteenth century. In my view the information of the charter of 1443, upon which Klaić based his reconstruction, can safely be left out of consideration, for its source, Desiderius Cserneki of Pozsega county, was hardly better informed than Ladislav Szencsei himself. The joint *fassio* made by John and Ladislav in 1456 is a more intricate problem, however, and in this case I am inclined to suppose a mistake on behalf of the scribe, who falsely put *eiusdem* alongside *similiter*, which in itself is correct, for both fathers were called Ladislav.

Yet in case Ladislav junior, John and Christopher were not brothers, there remains the question of who the father of the latter two was? Although this question cannot be answered definitively, it is highly probable that they descended from master Kakas, who, as we have seen above, divided the family estates with his brother Lókös in 1343. Thus, the grandson of master Kakas, called John, most likely had a son called Ladislav, who then became the father of John and Christopher. This reconstruction would sufficiently account for the reference to the other Szencse, for after the division our sources speak indeed about two parts of the same Szencse, and the appurtenances are likewise regularly divided between Lower and Upper Szencse.<sup>2173</sup> Consequently, Ladislav junior and his supposed brothers, John and Christopher were in fact merely related by the fourth degree, and their divergent careers fully support this new reconstruction of their descent.

Yet by distinguishing the two surviving branches of the Tibolds we have by no means solved all the difficulties facing the historian of the family. For Klaić thought that Ladislav junior had himself a son called Ladislav, and both held the office of viceban. Thus according to him three persons called Ladislav, grandfather, father and son, would have followed each other as vicebans of Slavonia.<sup>2174</sup> But Ladislav son of Ladislav, whom Klaić imagined to have been the grandson of Ladislav son of John, in his petition prepared for the papal court in 1462 stated that twenty years before, at the age of eight he had already

2172 MNL OL, DL 74 497: "in personis Ladislai filii Johannis filii Thiboldi de Zencze et Johannis filii quondam Ladislai de eadem Zencze."

2173 Adamček-Kampuš, *Popisi*, 10, 30.

2174 Klaić, "Plemići Svetački," genealogical table between pages 26 and 27. In discussing genealogical problems I continue to refer to this table below, without always indicating it in an independent footnote.

been an orphan.<sup>2175</sup> Although the events described in Ladislás junior's petition were not altogether in keeping with reality,<sup>2176</sup> we have absolutely no reason to reckon with a "middle" Ladislás: Ladislás junior was indeed the son of Ladislás son of John.

Now it is time to return to the problem of which Ladislás was the deputy of ban Hermann of Cilli in the 1420s and 1430s. The root of the problem is that we have two Ladislás, both the sons of a father called John, alive at one and the same time. Thus, in case no further clue is offered by our sources apart from the mere name of the viceban, decision is impossible. Fortunately, we have one single document, a *fassio* made before the chapter of Csázma in 1429 by viceban Ladislás Szencsei, son of John, in the name of his sons, Christopher, George and John.<sup>2177</sup> This charter makes it evident that the viceban in question was not Ladislás son of John son of Tibold, but his namesake from the other branch of the family which descended from Kakas.<sup>2178</sup> This, moreover, is a further proof of the fact that Christopher and John had no brother called Ladislás.

Unfortunately, the same problem returns again in the next generation. The career itself of a second Ladislás Szencsei can be summarised with sufficient precision. Between January 1459 and March 1464 he served as the viceban of John Vitovec, and presumably left his office together with his lord after the coronation of king Matthias. In March 1463 he was granted royal pardon together with another Szencsei, John, among the *familiares* of Vitovec.<sup>2179</sup> In 1468, when he was excommunicated by bishop Oswald of Zagreb because of the dispute over the tithe, the noble *universitas* of the county of Körös intervened on his behalf.<sup>2180</sup> In 1470 he returned to the office of viceban as the *familiaris* of ban Blaise Magyar. In October 1476 ban Ladislás Egervári appointed him again as one of his deputies, and, although for reasons unknown to us his place was taken during 1479 by Peter Bocskai,<sup>2181</sup> when

2175 Augustinus Theiner ed., *Vetera monumenta historica Hungariam sacram illustrantia I-II* (Romae: n.p., 1859–1860), vol. II, 372–73.

2176 He is mentioned by our sources as early as 1432 (MNL OL, DL 74 485: "Ladislai filii Johannis filii Thyboldi de Zenche ac alterius Ladislai filii eiusdem"), so, if we accept his statement, the forced marriage which provided the pretext for his petition to Rome should have taken place in 1440 at the latest. Yet, as we have seen, at that time he was surely not an orphan, for his father only died sometime after 1448.

2177 MNL OL, DF 278 723.

2178 Before getting knowledge of this charter, I also identified the viceban with the other Ladislás. Tamás Pálosfalvi, "A Szencsei és Pekri családok a 15. században és a 16. század első harmadában" [The Szencsei and Pekri Families in the Fifteenth Century and the First Part of the Sixteenth Century], *Turul* 86 (2010): 66.

2179 MNL OL, DF 233 405.

2180 MNL OL, DF 252 048.

2181 Perhaps the relationship between the ban and the Szencsei deteriorated for some reason, an indication of which can be the fact that in 1480 their castellum at Čubin, in the county of Zagreb, was sieged "ex speciali commissione et mandato" of the ban: MNL OL, DF 255 849.



Blaise Magyar briefly returned to Slavonia in 1482, Ladislás naturally reappeared by his side as viceban. Ladislás Szencsei was listed among the representatives of the Slavonian nobility on the second place in 1474, and on the third one four years later. But who was this Ladislás?

As we have seen above, Ladislás son of John, son of Tibold did have a son called Ladislás, who was surely alive in 1432. This Ladislás died before 28 June 1489, when his widow, Lucy gave a quittance to Francis Szencsei, who had paid her dower from the lands of her late husband.<sup>2182</sup> His wife was the daughter of Clement Tapán of Haraszt, prothonotary of the judge royal and of Slavonia, who, in his own words, had been forced on him against his will. On the other hand, John, the son of the other Ladislás, also had a son called Ladislás, who died in the course of 1484.<sup>2183</sup> Since he was then married, he was surely of age, and, consequently, he could also be identified as the viceban. Yet, as his father, John, seems to have been still under age in 1429, it is far less likely that he had a son capable of assuming the office of viceban in 1459, than is the supposition that it was in fact the other Ladislás, son of Ladislás, who was certainly born before 1432. It is, however, a mere conjecture that it was always the same Ladislás who took the office under the consecutive bans of Slavonia; it is, nevertheless, more probable than a supposed rotation between the two. The problem itself, although uniquely complex, is highly significant as a warning of how dependent all social reconstructions are upon the random survival of the sources and, consequently, how fragile they are.

His distant relative, John son of Ladislás apparently played a far less prominent role among the Slavonian nobility than either his own father or Ladislás junior. In September 1452 he was pardoned by governor John Hunyadi for his misdeeds committed thus far, but the nature of these violent acts is unknown.<sup>2184</sup> His relationship to his brother seems initially to have

2182 MNL OL, DL 74 535. The exact date of the death of Ladislás Szencsei junior can be of crucial help in dating a list without indication of year, which gives the number of horsemen to be equipped by the persons who figure on the list (DL 104 613). The list was registered in the Hungarian National Archives as issued sometime between 1490 and 1500, and András Kubinyi also dated it to “around the turn of the century” (András Kubinyi, “A Szávaszentdemeter–Nagyolaszi győzelem 1523-ban. Adatok Mohács előzményeihez” [The Victory of Szávaszentdemeter–Nagyolaszi. On the Precedents of Mohács], in idem, *Nándorfehérvártól Mohácsig*, 125, n. 18). Yet the list was surely drafted before 1493, when three persons on the list, Charles of Corbavia, John Frangepán and Stephen Csupor died. Now, the reference to Ladislás Szencsei makes it obvious that the list was in fact prepared before the death of king Matthias (as both Ladislás died before 1490). Alongside the Croatian counts and the voevode of Hum and his brothers, the list also contains noblemen from Slavonia: not only Ladislás Szencsei and Stephen Csupor, but also Balthasar Batthyány and a Čavlović, perhaps Paul. Batthyány, who received payment for 50 horses, and Csupor, who equipped 40, were beyond doubt the richest noblemen in Slavonia at that time, and Ladislás Szencsei followed them closely with his 32 horsemen.

2183 On this Ladislás see below.

2184 MNL OL, DL 74 501. In fact, Matthias Csapi, who was pardoned together with John Szencsei, had previously been a familiaris of Hunyadi himself.

been far from harmonious, for prior to 1456 Ladislás junior occupied the estates of the wife of John, whereas John put his hands upon the possessions of Ladislás when he took the castle of Szombathely.<sup>2185</sup> The reasons of the conflict remain unknown to us, but later on they served together John Vitovec. In 1468 John was among the four delegates of the Slavonian nobility who had the right to elect the persons who would then assist and control the bishop's men in collecting the tithe.<sup>2186</sup> Somewhat later he joined the entourage of John, bishop of Pécs, and it was upon the prelate's order that, together with John Mindszenti, he occupied the portions of the proscribed Caspar Kórógyi in the estate of Darnóc. Once within the castle, however, they immediately ousted the castellan and other men of Lawrence Bánfi, its co-owner, and occupied the whole for themselves.<sup>2187</sup> John died before 1481. He married at least twice; his first wife, whose name is not known, died before 1456,<sup>2188</sup> whereas the second, called Catherine, survived him. She was the daughter of Nicholas Velikei from the county of Pozsega, widow of Radivoy, younger brother of Stephen Thomas, king of Bosnia.<sup>2189</sup>

Among the sons of John Szencsei apparently George played the most outstanding role, although its details are not always clear. In March 1492 he was among the Slavonian lords who confirmed at Buda the inheritance of the Habsburgs. Still in the same year we see him as the alispán of Ladislás Egervári in the county of Pozsega.<sup>2190</sup> In the spring of 1494 he was, together with George Kapitáni of Desnice, sent by the Slavonian nobility to the king.<sup>2191</sup> After the removal of Egervári from the banhip he apparently shifted his allegiance, for in the course of that year we already find him in the service of bishop Oswald.<sup>2192</sup> On 24 March 1496 at Pressburg he received from king Wladislaw II the royal right in the lands of his deceased kinsmen, Ladislás son of Ladislás and Ladislás son of John, a sure sign that he still had access to the royal favour.<sup>2193</sup> Shortly afterwards he was certainly in disgrace, however, together with his brothers: Stephen and Francis, as well as with several members of the Pekri and Kasztelláni families, and even their possessions were donated

2185 MNL OL, DL 106 834.

2186 MNL OL, DF 252 047.

2187 MNL OL, DL 74 533.

2188 MNL OL, DL 106 834. She may have belonged to the Csupor family. In 1492 not only Bernard Rohfi but also the Szencsei (*nobiles de Zempche*) claimed to be heirs of the Csupor on the female line (HHStA, Erdődy 11122: "heredes femineis generacionis Chupor"). We have seen above that the mother of Bernard was indeed Catherine Csupor; it is thus possible that the first wife of John Szencsei was from the same family also. It is, however, the same possible that the connection dates back to viceban Ladislás the elder, whose consort is also unknown.

2189 MNL OL, DF 255 882; Csánki, *Történelmi földrajz*, vol. II, 435.

2190 Klaić, "Plemići Svetački," 38.

2191 Kukuljević, *Jura regni*, part II, 228–29.

2192 MNL OL, DL 107 104; DL 101 196: castellan of Hrasztovica.

2193 MNL OL, DL 33 326.

away by the king. Klaić supposed that the event was somehow connected to the revolt of ban John Corvin,<sup>2194</sup> and his hypothesis seems highly probable, although Francis Szencsei is the only one (together, perhaps, with Louis Pekri) among the culprits who can be proved to have stayed in the duke's service in the critical period. Yet, in view of the fact that the Pekri and the Kasztellánfi were sentenced to loss of property in 1496 for violently obstructing tax-collection in Slavonia, the Szencsei may also have been afflicted for the same reason. Whatever the truth, the affair was important enough for the Slavonian nobility to intervene through envoys with the king.<sup>2195</sup> The case of George Szencsei was particularly delicate, however, or the king's grace more difficult to obtain, for it was only after a second dispatch of Slavonian envoys that Wladislaw II ordered the prothonotary of Slavonia, Nicholas Vojkfi, to deliver the estates of George which had thus far been occupied by Elias Bosnyák.<sup>2196</sup>

Yet it seems that the portions of George had in the meantime been taken by his kinsmen,<sup>2197</sup> and his actions were henceforth directed by his will to get them back. Sometime during 1501 he occupied the portions of Francis Beriszló in the district of Szencse together with the *castellum* there,<sup>2198</sup> and soon turned against his own brother, Stephen. At first he joined the revolting ban of Slavonia, Andrew Both of Bajna with the evident aim of profiting from the upheaval there, then chose a new lord in the person of another restless trouble-maker, Bartholomew prior of Vrana.<sup>2199</sup> His efforts did not pay off, however, and he seems to have died childless soon thereafter.

Much less is known about his two brothers, Ladislás and Stephen. Ladislás, who appears to have been the eldest among them, died between 23 June and 2 December in 1484.<sup>2200</sup> From his wife called Christine he probably had a son named Nicholas, who died sometime during 1495.<sup>2201</sup> Stephen married Ursula, the daughter of Nicholas Kasztellánfi, who bore him a son called Pangracius (Pongrác).<sup>2202</sup> The wife of the latter was the sister (*soror*) of

2194 Klaić, "Plemići Svetački," 40–41.

2195 Kukuljević, *Jura regni*, part II, 241.

2196 MNL OL, DF 268 149: "superioribus diebus universitas regnicolarum illius regni nostri Sclavonie pro parte egregii Georgii Zempchey supplicaverat ut nos bona eiusdem sibi remitti facere dignaremur."

2197 In 1507 he is registered with a mere 15 peasant plots. Adamček–Kampuš, *Popisi*, 30.

2198 MNL OL, DL 21 084.

2199 MNL OL, DL 25 510 (1509).

2200 MNL OL, DF 255 882, DF 255 884.

2201 Although according to Klaić he had a son called Francis, the person who turns up as Franciscus Ladizlaych de Zenthmarthon in 1508 among the neighbours of Fejérkő, and to whom I will return later, was surely not his son. On the other hand, the Nicholas son of Ladislás, who had a common castellan with Stephen son of John at Szombathely in 1495 (MNL OL, DF 231 904), was certainly his son. Since he is not listed in the tax list of 1495, he must have died in the course of this year. As we have seen above, on 14 March 1496 the portions of both Ladislás were donated by the king to George Szencsei, it is thus safe to conclude that by that time none of them had surviving offspring.

2202 Klaić, "Plemići Svetački," 43.

archbishop Bakóc, a marriage certainly not unrelated to the territorial ambitions of the prelate in Slavonia, which had previously already manifested themselves in family connections established with the Csupor and the Rohfi. In any case, the support of Bakóc must have been of considerable help for Stephen Szencsei and his son in their conflict with George Szencsei.<sup>2203</sup>

The fourth brother, Francis, was born from the second wife of John Szencsei, Catherine, and was thus only half-brother of Ladislás, George and Stephen.<sup>2204</sup> In 1493 he is mentioned as the *familiaris* of John Kishorvát and Lawrence Bánfi,<sup>2205</sup> but later he entered the service of duke John Corvin and participated as his *familiaris* to the diet of Rákos in 1498.<sup>2206</sup> From his first wife, whose name is unknown to us, he had four sons, Nicholas, John, Michael and Christopher.<sup>2207</sup> For the second time he married one of the daughters of Peter Bocskai, Martha, who bore him a son called Wolfgang (Farkas).<sup>2208</sup> Francis died before 1510, and all of his possessions apparently devolved on his eldest son, Nicholas.<sup>2209</sup> All that is known about the latter is that in 1513 it was upon the intervention of this Nicholas and Peter Keglević that viceban Balthasar Batthyány released Michael Török of Sándorfalva, arrested for violent trespass, and this is a clear indication of his influence.<sup>2210</sup> Later he served for some time ban Peter Beriszló and died childless (sometime during 1520).<sup>2211</sup> His three brothers and their half-brother, Wolfgang, all survived the battle of Mohács and played an important role in the critical years thereafter. John married already before Mohács Catherine Bevenyöd, the widow of Sylvester Kapitánfi, and thus acquired portions of the estate of Desnice.<sup>2212</sup> In the 1520s he is attested as a court *familiaris*.<sup>2213</sup> As for Wolfgang, he had to share the estate of Szentlőrinc, which he had inherited from his mother, with Ladislás Kisvárdai, from the Gutkeled kindred, who had married the daughter of Martha Bocskai called Catherine.<sup>2214</sup>

We are facing a much more intricate problem in searching for the supposed members of the Mihalc branch. Following the chronological order,

2203 MNL OL, DL 25 487.

2204 MNL OL, DF 255 882, DL 32 833.

2205 MNL OL, DF 233 299.

2206 Klaić, "Plemići Svetački," 40.

2207 MNL OL, DL 74 548.

2208 MNL OL, DL 94 317.

2209 Adamček-Kampuš, *Popisi*, 98.

2210 MNL OL, DL 101 463.

2211 Klaić, "Plemići Svetački," 34. He is surely wrong in supposing that this Nicholas was the son of Ladislás, son of Ladislás, and that he was identical with the "master Nicholas of Szencse and Vasmegyerice" mentioned in 1521; the latter certainly had nothing to do with the Szencsei family.

2212 His wife is the widow of Sylvester Kapitánfi of Desnice: MNL OL, DL 101 531, the daughter of Nicholas Bevenyöd: Klaić, "Plemići Svetački," 45.

2213 Fraknói, "Lajos király számadásikönyve," 132.

2214 MNL OL, DL 94 317; DL 101 597; DF 255 568.

at first we meet in 1442 Ladislav son of Nicholas, who is, surprisingly enough, the very *familiaris* of John, son of Ladislav.<sup>2215</sup> In 1450 Nicholas and Stephen Szencsei are referred to as royal men.<sup>2216</sup> In 1469 a complaint is lodged by Ladislav son of Ladislav against Ladislav son of Nicholas.<sup>2217</sup> In 1476 Ladislav, son of the late Nicholas is the castellan of despot Vuk at Fejérkő,<sup>2218</sup> and at the same time Ladislav, the son of a certain Stephen Horváth of Szencse occurs as castellan of Bagyanovc.<sup>2219</sup> Then comes in 1486 Nicholas son of Ladislav (*Nicolaus Ladislawycz*), mentioned above, to be followed in 1487 by Ladislav son of Ladislav (*Ladizlaus Ladizlawich*), who turns up as a noble juror of Körös county.<sup>2220</sup> The list can be completed by the Nicholas son of Ladislav (*Nicolaus Ladizlawych*) who is recorded to have owned 2 to 9 sessions at Szencse between 1495 and 1517.<sup>2221</sup> In 1508 this Nicholas is attested as a royal man at the introduction of the Berisló family into the estate of Fejérkő, where Francis son of Ladislav (*Francisco Ladyzlayth de Zenthmarthon*) also appears as an abutter.<sup>2222</sup> Finally, in 1524 this same *Franciscus Ladyslawych of Zempchezentmarthon* was castellan at Dobovc.<sup>2223</sup>

Now, it is evident that all these persons belonged to the same Szencsei family as did those treated above. Yet it is the same evident that they represented a clearly inferior category within the nobility: none of them was ever accorded the *egregius* title, and the known aspects of their “public” activity also separate them from the rest of their kin. It is impossible to link them to the known members of the Tibold branch, which, of course, does not exclude the possibility that they too had descended from Tibold. It is on the basis of the recurrent name *Ladislavich*, and the adjective “Horvát” (Croatian), which turns up once, that I think that these members of the Szencsei family were the descendants of Mihalc, whose grandson, Paul, is lost from our eyes in the very first years of the fifteenth century as viceban of Croatia and podesta of Spalato. How and when they returned to Slavonia is a problem that cannot be solved. Only Ladislav son of Nicholas can be shown to have possessed a tiny parcel of the estate of Szencse itself, although it is to be admitted that we

2215 MNL OL, DF 255 717: “Nicolao filio Ladislai de dicta Zenche.”

2216 MNL OL, DF 231 261.

2217 MNL OL, DF 255 808.

2218 MNL OL, DL 74 528.

2219 MNL OL, DL 17 875.

2220 MNL OL, DL 32 833. Klaić identified him with viceban Ladislav, son of Ladislav, which is excluded among other things by the fact that we find no persons of viceban Ladislav's status among the noble jurors of the late 1480s. On this problem see later on.

2221 Adamček–Kampuš, *Popisi*, 10, 30, 98. Again, according to Klaić this Nicholas was the son of the nonexistent “middle” Ladislav and thus the brother of viceban Ladislav. In the charter referred to by the Croatian historian (MNL OL, DL 33 495) there is no mention of this Nicholas at all.

2222 MNL OL, DL 34 323.

2223 MNL OL, DF 277 175/313 ecw. Klaić thought this Francis to have been the son of Ladislav, son of John.

have no tax registers prior to 1495. It was in all probability their relative poverty with regard to their distant kin that forced them to take on posts such as the castellanship of the neighbouring fortifications.

#### 2.2.46. Tahi (de Thah, Tah, Tahy)

The origins of John Tahi, who launched the family's career in Slavonia, are rather obscure. The village whose name he and his relatives bore lay in the medieval county of Pilis. Yet it was not one of their ancient pieces of property. The village of Tah had been donated by king Albert in 1439 to Frank Pekri and his brothers, who then adopted Stephen Botos and his brother, Peter, as their brothers and gave them the village together with an adjacent *predium* for certain financial services previously done to them by Stephen.<sup>2224</sup> This Stephen was notary in the chancery already during the last years of Sigismund's reign, and later rose to become royal prothonotary, parallelly pursuing a career in the church as well, holding canonries at Vác and Várad. He retained his leading position in the chancery under John Hunyadi and Ladislas V as well, and received as a form of reward the provostry of Dömös in the early 1450s.<sup>2225</sup>

In 1437, when he and his brother received from king Sigismund parts of the village of Félegyház in the county of Bihar, they were called of Hosszúaszó.<sup>2226</sup> There were four villages in medieval Hungary of that name, three among them owned by noble families to which Stephen and Peter can by no means be attached. It is thus with good reason that György Bónis supposed that they were in fact inhabitants of Hosszúaszó in the county of Bihar, owned by the bishop of Várad, and were thus non-nobles by origin. Nevertheless, thanks to the services of Stephen in the chancery, they acquired considerable possessions, mainly in the counties of Pest and Pilis, but also in that of Bihar.<sup>2227</sup>

The descendants of Peter were at first called Botos of Tah, and later simply Tahi, which seems to have become their residence.<sup>2228</sup> Nothing is known about the two sons of Peter, Elias and Stephen, who lived the ordinary life of the county nobility. In 1492 Stephen turns up as a designated royal man, in the company of other local noblemen, and even if the person to be cited was duke John Corvin himself, it cannot be regarded as a mark of growing prestige.<sup>2229</sup> The first sign which can be interpreted in this sense is the fact that in 1505 Stephen was one of the envoys sent by the county of Pilis to the assembly of

2224 MNL OL, DL 13 317, DL 14 095.

2225 Bónis, *Jogtudó értelmiség*, 51, 159–60.

2226 MNL OL, DL 13 146, DL 13271. In neither of these two charters cited by Bónis did I find any trace of the ennoblement mentioned by the eminent legal historian.

2227 Bónis, *Jogtudó értelmiség*, 151, n. 15; Mályusz, "Magyar rendi állam," 586–89.

2228 MNL OL, DL 17 568, DL 17 454, DL 17 864.

2229 MNL OL, DL 37 669.



Rákos.<sup>2230</sup> It is totally enigmatic, however, how he got acquainted with Bartholomew Beriszló, prior of Vrana, whose sister he married.<sup>2231</sup> This ignorance of ours is a real pity, for it was surely this marriage which paved the way before the Tahi family to Slavonia. Although it may seem to be going too far without any evidence, I would not exclude the possibility that it was somehow connected to the career of Peter Pan of Báté, another nobleman from Pilis, who, as told above, had previously gone south to Pozsega, the native county of the Beriszló family. There are, moreover, other problems as well. In 1480 Elias Tahi had three sons called Peter, Martin and Nicholas, whereas the only son of Stephen was named Bernard at the same time.<sup>2232</sup> John, son of Stephen is first referred to in 1505, when he was represented by his father before the chapter of Buda.<sup>2233</sup> This does not mean that he was still a minor, for only two years later we already see him in Slavonia receiving a possession from his uncle, Bartholomew Beriszló.<sup>2234</sup> He seems thus to have been born shortly after 1480, perhaps from another mother than Bernard.

Whatever the case, in 1509 John was already governing the priory of Vrana for his uncle,<sup>2235</sup> and at the time of prior Bartholomew's death in 1512 all the castles of the priory remained in his hands, and were consequently taken over by Peter Beriszló in the name of the king. In return, John received from the king those portions of the estate of Gorbonok which had been held by Bartholomew Beriszló until his death, as it seems. These were the portions of the late Stephen Gorbonoki and David Dombai, thanks to which John Tahi came to possess well over two hundred tenant plots in the county of Körös, with a *castellum* at Gorbonok.<sup>2236</sup> Consequently, he also put his hands on some parts of the Belosovci lands.<sup>2237</sup>

In the next decade we know very little about the activities of John Tahi. In April 1518 he protested personally, together with Stephen Tahi, on their way to or back from the assembly of Buda, before the Hospitaller convent of Fehérvár,<sup>2238</sup> while in 1519 he collected the Slavonian tax.<sup>2239</sup> In 1521–1522 he was ban of Jajce together with Peter Keglević.<sup>2240</sup> In August 1522 he contracted an agreement with the newly appointed prior of Vrana, Matthias Baracsi, to whom he had given as much as 12 000 florins to redeem the possessions of the priory from the *familiares* of the late Peter Beriszló; in return, the prior, who had adopted John

2230 MNL OL, DL 22 559.

2231 MNL OL, DF 268 266: "egregii Johannis de Thah [...] condam Bartholomei prioris ex sorore nepotis."

2232 MNL OL, DL 18 353.

2233 MNL OL, DL 21 431.

2234 MNL OL, DF 232 208: "cuidam nobili Johanni de Thah consanguineo suo."

2235 MNL OL, DF 232 266.

2236 MNL OL, DF 219 189; *Somogy Megye Múltjából* 14 (1983), no. 165.

2237 MNL OL, DF 277 175/503–05 ecw.

2238 MNL OL, DL 23 021.

2239 MNL OL, DL 38 042: "dicatorem huius regni."

2240 Thallóczy–Horváth, *Jajca*, CCLXXIII; MNL OL, DL 106 083/300 ecw.

Tahi as his son, mortgaged to him those possessions which were then in his hands, among them the castles of Pekrec and Csurgó and the *castellum* of Krassó.<sup>2241</sup> In February 1523 he was among the Slavonian noble leaders who convoked their fellow nobles for an assembly to Izdenc, another proof that he had by that time been adopted as one of their ranks.<sup>2242</sup> A year later he was appointed, together with Francis Batthyány, as ban of Slavonia and Croatia, but, although he did occupy the castles belonging to the *banatus*, he was only partially recognised by the local nobility.<sup>2243</sup> The reasons for this (partial) refusal to accept him as ban on the part of the Slavonian nobility apparently had nothing to do with the non-Slavonian origins or the personality of John Tahi; the conflict should rather be seen as part of the strife between the kin of the late archbishop Bakóc, led by Simon, bishop of Zagreb, and ban John of Corbavia on the one hand, and chancellor Szalkai, whose backing John Tahi seems indeed to have enjoyed, on the other. Whatever the case, some of the leading Slavonian nobility, such as John Kasztellánfi, and John and Nicholas Pekri, did accept Tahi as their superior.<sup>2244</sup> Francis Batthyány himself, his colleague in the office, later blamed bishop Simon for the resistance against Tahi.<sup>2245</sup>

András Kubinyi supposed that Tahi was also member of the so-called “Kalandos” alliance, formed in the summer of 1525, the prime goal of which was the consolidation of royal authority. Yet the prior of Vrana mentioned there was certainly not Tahi, who was never titular prior, but Matthias Baracsi, already mentioned above.<sup>2246</sup> He nevertheless enjoyed firm royal support, and it was even rumoured that Louis II planned a personal visit to Slavonia in order to get his ban generally recognised.<sup>2247</sup> Later on, however, the king merely prompted Francis Batthyány to persuade the Slavonian nobility to accept his colleague, but even his influence proved insufficient.<sup>2248</sup> John Tahi was forced to resign definitively from the banal office shortly before the great Ottoman offensive in 1526.<sup>2249</sup> Yet in the early spring of the same year he had

2241 MNL OL, DL 23 657. See also DF 277 175/017–021 ecw.

2242 MNL OL, DF 252 335.

2243 Thallóczy–Hodinka, *Horvát véghelyek oklevéltára*, 397 (on the occupation of the castles); “Est eciam hic fama quod regnicole Sclavonie nolunt facere dietam in Varasdino tum propterea quod civitas illa duas tantum portas haberet et nollet (!) in tali loco includi, tum quia esset hoc contra eorum libertates ut illic dietam preter solitum celebrarent; fama eciam est eos dixisse quod propterea nollent in civitate murata convenire propter Joannem Tahy quia rex ad instanciam meam vellet eos cogere in eo loco ut illum in banum susciperent,” as the letter of chancellor Szalkai to Francis Batthyány states: MNL OL, DL 104 452.

2244 MNL OL, DF 277 175/441 ecw.

2245 Šišić, *Acta comitalia*, vol. I, 158–63.

2246 MNL OL, DL 82 712: prior *Aurane*, identified by Kubinyi as John Tahi in “Közneemesi ülnökök,” 268. Matthias Baracsi, prior of Vrana, is at Buda in August 1525: DL 106 773.

2247 MNL OL, DL 104 452. The chancellor, it is true, maintained that the king intended to make the journey “nec pro se nec pro Johanne Tahy sed pro salute confiniorum et regnorum suorum.”

2248 Kukuljević, *Iura regni*, part II, 273–74.

2249 Thallóczy–Hodinka, *Horvát véghelyek oklevéltára*, 544.

managed to have his son, called Francis, appointed by Louis II as prior of Vrana, and consequently took over the administration of the immense estates and several castles of the priory in the name of his son.<sup>2250</sup> It guaranteed him a place of considerable influence even after the battle of Mohács, where he conducted the troops of the priory. John married Magdalena, the daughter of George Sztrazsemljei from the county of Pozsega.<sup>2251</sup>

#### 2.2.47. Tompa of Horzova (de Horzowa, Hrsovo)

The origins of the Horzovai family are impossible to reconstruct with absolute certainty, but there is a strong likelihood that they were equally nobles belonging to the castle of Körös.<sup>2252</sup> The first known member of the family, John, the son of Andrew, was szolgabíró in the county of Körös in the years around the turn of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. It was as such that in February 1405 he appeared before the king at Visegrád and proved there that he had remained faithful to Sigismund in the course of the past revolts.<sup>2253</sup> At the same time a certain master Nicholas, son of another John Horzovai is attested as a canon of Csázma, who had an uncle called Thomas.<sup>2254</sup> Other nobles equally called Horzovai also turn up in our sources, but unfortunately it is impossible to link them to each other.<sup>2255</sup>

John had three sons, Matthew, James and Andrew. Matthew and James were designated as royal men in 1435,<sup>2256</sup> and Matthew is referred to as *comes terrestris* of Körös in 1437.<sup>2257</sup> It may have been this James, or his namesake, the son of Matthew, who, together with his kinsman Thomas, petitioned in 1454 together with John Vitovec and the Megyericsei brothers a possession of the chapter of Csázma from the king.<sup>2258</sup> Since Frank and James Megyericsei were at that time in the service of Vitovec, we may reasonably presume this to have been the case with the Horzovai as well. In 1461 George, son of Matthew was an arbitrator in the company of Nicholas Dombai, ban of Macsó, in a case

2250 MNL OL, DF 276 806.

2251 Borsa, *Balassa család levéltára*, no. 534.

2252 In 1416, after Ladislas Cirkvenai had disappeared in the Bosnian expedition, the sons of John Horzovai were among those who tried to obtain his properties on account of his heirless death. *Zsigmondkori Oklevéltár*, vol. V, no. 2512. The fact that Matthew Horzovai was *comes terrestris* of Körös (see below) points in the same direction, and so does a reference to James Horzovai as patron of the parish church of Hegen in the vicinity of Körös itself: MNL OL, DF 255 803.

2253 MNL OL, DF 230 845. See also Lukinović, *Povijesni spomenici*, vol. V, 31, 46, Smičiklas, *Codex diplomaticus*, vol. XVIII, 83.

2254 Lukinović, *Povijesni spomenici*, vol. V, 126–27.

2255 *Zsigmondkori Oklevéltár*, vol. VI, no. 1031; MNL OL, DL 38 718.

2256 Lukinović, *Povijesni spomenici*, vol. VI, 439.

2257 MNL OL, DF 218 734.

2258 MNL OL, DL 102 124: “Jacobus egregius (!) et Thomas dicti Tumpa de Horzova.”

involving the castellan of Bakva and the local *provisor*.<sup>2259</sup> This George, also bearing the sobriquet Tompa, must have been a man of more than elementary literacy, for in 1477 he is recorded as possessing several books, among them chronicles, medical and horticultural works.<sup>2260</sup> His kinsman, Thomas Tompa, was for more than two decades canon of Zagreb, and for some time also that of Esztergom.<sup>2261</sup> Another member of his kin, Paul Horzovai, who frequently turns up as a designated royal man in the second half of the fifteenth century, was regularly titled as master, another sign of higher education.<sup>2262</sup>

All this, of course, would not be sufficient reason for dealing with the family among the noble élite of the county. Not even the fact in itself that in 1474 James and George Tompa were listed among the representatives of the Slavonian nobility. At the congregation of 1481, however, Michael and Thomas Tompa were proscribed among the nobility of the county of Zagreb, as unjustly extorting tolls from the burghers of Zagreb at a place called *Jaxabrisda*; what settlement this toponym referred to I was unable to find out.<sup>2263</sup> A year later we meet Michael Tompa as a courtier sent by king Matthias to occupy the vacant estate of Garignica.<sup>2264</sup> Although nothing proves beyond doubt that he is identical with Michael Tompa of Horzova, the career of the latter certainly supports this suggestion. By the early 1500 he had gathered a landed wealth amounting to some 40 inhabited tenant plots in several different villages, and was, alone among his kin, titled *egregius*.<sup>2265</sup> In 1508 he was tax collector in Slavonia, which again supports the hypothesis that he is to be identified as the courtier of 1482.<sup>2266</sup> There is a strong probability that two years before he had already discharged the same duty in Slavonia.<sup>2267</sup> He married Christine, the daughter of Nicholas Garázda, who in all likelihood belonged to the Garázda of Garazdinc family. Nicholas Garázda was a *familiaris* of Stephen Szapolyai, who first appointed him as his castellan of Zelina, and later took him to the county of Pozsega as his alispán there.<sup>2268</sup> After the death of Michael Tompa Christine married an *egregius* nobleman of the same county, Ladislás Bencsik

2259 MNL OL, DL 35 989.

2260 MNL OL, DF 275 094: "quamplures libros tam medicinales, cronicas et ortulanos et nonnullos alios libros."

2261 Tkalčić, *Monumenta*, 249, 357, 398; MNL OL, DF 255 811.

2262 MNL OL, DF 255 809, DL 17 193, DF 255 594, DL 103 789, DF 276 864.

2263 Tkalčić, *Monumenta*, 405–06. Since they were proscribed among the nobility of Zagreb, the place in question must evidently have lain in that county. See Adamček–Kampuš, *Popisi*, 156 and 191, however, where the Christopher Tompa seems to be identical with the son of John Tompa of Horzova.

2264 MNL OL, DL 103 867.

2265 MNL OL, DF 279 472, DF 279 513. His possessions: Adamček–Kampuš, *Popisi*, 13, 28, 32; MNL OL, DF 232 507.

2266 Iványi, *Körmendi memorabiliák*, 31–32.

2267 Thallóczy–Horváth, *Jajcza*, 208 (1506): "Item Michael Thompa ad petitionem domini thesaurarii ordinavit banis prefatis circa festum beati Jacobi apostoli."

2268 MNL OL, DL 107 102 (castellan); DL 59 870 (alispán).

(Benchyk, sometimes Benchych, Benčić) of Cirkvenik, who was allegedly related to the Szapolyai family, and who received from his lord, duke Lawrence Újlaki, the castle of Bakva for his lifetime.<sup>2269</sup>

Whatever the case, the brief career of Michael Tompa failed to have any durable influence upon the life of his kinsmen, probably because he did not have offspring. His brother (*frater*), John Tompa, was for some time in the service of David Dombai, and is also referred to as a royal man together with his kinsman, Blaise Nagy (*Magnus*) of Horzova.<sup>2270</sup> One of his four sons, Balthasar Tompa of Horzova, equally joined the royal court, perhaps with the backing of his uncle, but his career there involved no social rise; in 1519 he is mentioned as a special royal man sent from the court, and in the 1520s he is referred to as a notary of the smaller royal chancellery.<sup>2271</sup> The last member of the family about whom we know something is a certain Michael Benković (Benkoich) of Horzova, who was likewise designated royal man, and later stood in the service of the Ernuszt family.<sup>2272</sup>

#### 2.2.48. Tulbert of Berstyanóc (Tulbert od Brštanovca, Thulbert de Berschanowch, Berschyanocz, etc.)

The family which came to be known as Tulbert of Berstyanóc, originally counts of Prata (today Prata di Pordenone, ITA), came from the Italian province of Friaul.<sup>2273</sup> Those members of the fairly populous family who concern us here seem to have descended from a man called Pileus (Pileo), who lived in the first half of the fourteenth century.<sup>2274</sup> Pileus had at least three sons, Tulbertus (Tulberto), Gabriel and Biachinus (Biachino).<sup>2275</sup> The son of Biachino di Prata, Peter (Pietro) Pileo, was cardinal of the Roman Church in

2269 MNL OL, DF 232 507: the wife of Ladislás Bencsik is Christine, “alias relictā egregii quondam Michaelis Thompa de Horzowa;” DF 277 175/455–57 ecw: “domine Christine consortis egregii Ladislai Benczyk de Bakwa filie vero nobilis quondam Nicolai Garazda.” Laszowski, *Monumenta Habsburgica*, vol. I, 216 (received the castle of Bakva, *consanguineus* of John Szapolyai). It is worth remarking that the previous wife of Ladislás Bencsik was the daughter of Stephen Dersfi of Szerdahely: MNL OL, DF 225 504.

2270 MNL OL, DL 106 869, DL 104 017; DF 232 028.

2271 Borsa, *Justh család levéltára*, no. 701; MNL OL, DL 38 060, DF 267 967 (the latter reads as “homo regius egregius Balthasar Thompa notarius cancellarie minoris regie maiestatis”). See Bónis, *Jogtudó értelmiség*, 406, n. 90.

2272 MNL OL, DF 277 175/491–95 ecw.

2273 Engel, *Archontológia*, vol. II, 199; MNL OL, DL 102 077: “Johannes et Tulbertus comites de Pratis nunc vero de Berscanoucz.”

2274 Giambattista Verci, *Storia della marca trivigiana e veronese*, vol. VII of 20 (Venezia: Presso Giacomo Storti, 1786–1791), 8, 14.

2275 Verci, *Storia*, vol. XI/10, 175–76: “domino Tolberto nato quondam nobilis viri domini Pegli de Prata [...] vice et nomine nobilium virorum dominorum Gabrielis et Biachini fratrum ipsius.”

the fourteenth century,<sup>2276</sup> and it was apparently from his brother, Tulberto (Tulbertus) that the family which later became rooted in Slavonia descended.<sup>2277</sup> Both his presumed sons, Nicholas (Niccolò/Nicolussio) and William (Guglielmino) supported king Sigismund in his struggle against Venice,<sup>2278</sup> and Nicholas, who in 1404 had still stood in the service of the Republic,<sup>2279</sup> even fought alongside Pipo of Ozora (Filippo Scolari), commander of the Hungarian troops, in the Friuli campaign in 1412.<sup>2280</sup> His brother, William, was sent by Sigismund as his councillor to Friuli in order to prepare his new campaign against Venice.<sup>2281</sup> In 1413 he was still acting as Sigismund's commissioner and envoy in Friuli.<sup>2282</sup> He seems to have stayed constantly by the Hungarian ruler's side, for he is attested at Constance in 1417, at Passau in 1418, and in Kuttenberg (Bohemia) in 1420, in all cases in the entourage of Sigismund.<sup>2283</sup> His brother, Nicholas, remained in his native region,<sup>2284</sup> and in 1419 we again find him again in war against Venice on the side of Sigismund.<sup>2285</sup> Apparently it was William who first took refuge definitively in Hungary, to be followed by his brother Nicholas in 1420, after the family castle at Prata had been occupied and destroyed by the Venetians, and they lost their

2276 Bishop of Padova, then archbishop of Ravenna, cardinal. See Konrad Eubel, *Hierarchia catholica medii aevi, sive summorum pontificum, s. r. e. cardinalium, ecclesiarum antistitum series ab anno 1198 usque ad annum 1431 perducta*. Monasterii, MDCCCXIII, 23, 39, 45, 386, 415, 480.

2277 "domini Brachino (recte: Biachino) et Tulberto eius filio de Prata militibus:" J(osef) v(on) Zahn, ed., *Austro-Friulana. Sammlung von Actenstücken zur Geschichte des Conflictes Herzog Rudolfs IV von Österreich mit dem Patriarchate von Aquileja 1358–1365*. Fontes Rerum Austriacarum. Zweite Abteilung. Diplomataria et Acta. XL. Band. (Wien: Gerold, 1877), 210. The brotherhood of Pietro and Tolberto is presumed on the basis of the fact that both of them are referred to as the "cusin german" of Francesco of Carrara, evidently a maternal relationship. See *Additamentum primum ad Chronicon Cortusiorum patavino dialecto conscriptum*, in Lodovico Antonio Muratori, *Rerum Italicarum Scriptores*, vol. XII of XXVIII (Milano: n.p., 1723–1751), 959–60; "Tulbertus [...] de Prata, germanus ipsius magnifici domini Francisci de Carraria, et quem ipse magnificus dominus a cunabulis aluerat feceratque virum potentem:" Galeazzo e Bartolomeo Gatari, *Cronaca Carrarese*. Volume secundo. A cura di Roberto Cessi [*Rerum Italicarum Scriptores*, vol. XVII, part I], (Bologna: Nicola Zanichelli, 1942), 115. On the early history of the family see also Joseph Valentinielli ed., *Diplomatarium Portusnaonense* [*Fontes Rerum Austriacarum*. Zweite Abteilung. Diplomataria et Acta, vol. XXIV] (Vienna: n.p., 1865), *passim*.

2278 *Zsigmondkori Oklevéltár*, vol. III, no. 2123.

2279 Francesco di Manzano, *Annali del Friuli, ossia Raccolta delle cose storiche appartenenti a questa regione*, vol. 5: Anno 1312 dell'era volgare al 1387 (Udine: Tip. di Giuseppe Seitz, Editrice, 1865), 172.

2280 *Ibid.*, 236.

2281 *Zsigmondkori Oklevéltár*, vol. III, no. 2853.

2282 *Ibid.*, vol. IV, no. 875.

2283 *Ibid.*, vol. VI, nos. 1910, 2538, vol. VII, no. 2090.

2284 *Ibid.*, vol. VI, no. 647.

2285 *Ibid.*, vol. VII, no. 638.



ancestral lands in Friuli.<sup>2286</sup> They received from Sigismund the castle of Berstyanóc in the county of Körös which, however, they shared with the Latk family.<sup>2287</sup> John, son of William<sup>2288</sup> nevertheless regarded the appurtenances of the castle as his own and alienated them at will.<sup>2289</sup> William himself remained in the service of Sigismund after his settlement in Hungary, and certainly accompanied the king on his Italian journey in 1432–33.<sup>2290</sup> John prepared his last will in 1441, and died before 1446; he had no surviving son from his marriage with a woman called Magdalena.<sup>2291</sup> His cousin, Tulbert is referred to as a knight in the court of king Albert, but he is recorded in the charter as having served emperor Sigismund also.<sup>2292</sup> Indeed, already in 1433 we find him alongside the king at Viterbo, together with a kinsman of his called Sigismund, who is not known have stayed in Slavonia.<sup>2293</sup> In 1457 he was already one of the envoys sent by the Slavonian nobility to the king, a commission certainly not unrelated to the fact that his sister, Jacoma, had been married to Caspar Kasztellánfi.<sup>2294</sup> He died shortly after 1465.<sup>2295</sup>

The only son of Tulbert was called Nicholas. He seems to have been under age at the time of his father's death, for he was for some time under the

2286 MNL OL, DL 101 341: “quondam comes Nicolaus pater suus et per consequens ipse (sc. Tulbertus) propter fidelitatis dicto quondam domino imperatori ac huic regno nostro Hungarie observacionem eorum terris patrimoniisque et dominiis quas et que in Fori Julii partibus optinebant per Venetos et eorum gentes armigeras privati sunt et destituti.”

2287 Engel, *Archontológia*, vol. I, no. 278; MNL OL, DL 100 502. In 1424 they are already in possession of the estate: *Zsigmondkori Oklevéltár*, vol. XI, no. 1342.

2288 In fact, John is not said to have been the son of William. In his own will John called Tulbertus “fratrem meum carissimum,” but in other contemporary documents John is referred to as the patruelis frater of Tulbertus (MNL OL, DL 101 341, DL 35 601). Since Tulbertus was surely the son of Nicholas (“egregii Toloberti aule nostre militis filii scilicet quondam magnifici Nicolai comitis de Prata,” DL 101 341), John was very probably the son of William.

2289 MNL OL, DL 102 077; *Levéltári Közlemények* (1933): 74.

2290 Péter E. Kovács, “Zsigmond császár megkoronázása Rómában” [The Coronation of Emperor Sigismund in Rome], *Századok* 143 (2009): 1360: “El conte Guglielmo,” member of the royal entourage at Siena, is certainly identical with William of Prata.

2291 *Levéltári Közlemények* 7 (1929): 289–91. In his testament, his wife is called Magdalena, whereas in 1446 his widow is referred to as domina Bango (MNL OL, DL 103 603); the two may be identical. This Bango is probably the woman of the same name who turns up in 1454 as the sister of Demetrius Tárnok of Gát, then already the wife of John Pekri (MNL OL, DL 103 638). Demetrius, from the county of Valkó, was a knight in the royal court in the 1430s (Engel, *Archontológia*, vol. II, 82), just like the cousin of John, Tulbert, so a marriage with his sister would only be logical to suppose.

2292 Engel, *Archontológia*, vol. II, 199. He made services to Sigismund “in Almanie, Lombardie, Tuscie et Italie partibus,” and to king Albert “in regno nostro Bohemie.” MNL OL, DL 101 341.

2293 E. Kovács, “Zsigmond megkoronázása,” 1362: “Tobertob de Plato,” “Gismundo de Plato” (Toloberto and Sigismundo di Prata).

2294 MNL OL, DF 268 080; Maček–Jurković, *Rodoslov plemića*, 93–94.

2295 *Levéltári Közlemények* 12 (1934): 140, 149–50.

tutelage of Ladislás Roh.<sup>2296</sup> About his mother, called Barbara, we only know that after the death of her husband she married Paul Grebeni, and before 1481 she left for Germany, perhaps an indication that she had originally arrived with his husband from somewhere outside the Kingdom of Hungary.<sup>2297</sup> Nicholas himself was betrothed around 1470 with Ursula, the daughter of Nicholas Kasztellánfi. Alongside the estate of Berstyanóc in the county of Körös, Nicholas also owned that of Ilova in Verőce, which had been donated to the family together with the estate of Berstyanóc.<sup>2298</sup> Since his sister, Catherine, married Michael Latk of Latkovina, Nicholas also tried to put his hands on the neighbouring estate of Mogor, but he proved impotent to make good his claims against Ladislás Hermanfi.<sup>2299</sup> In return, the latter Ladislás also sued him for the estate of Berstyanóc, and in 1484 Nicholas had to content his opponent with the handing over of two possessions on the appurtenances of Berstyanóc.<sup>2300</sup>

In the 1470s and 1480s Nicholas, always titled *egregius*, frequently turns up in cases of violent trespass and as a neighbour.<sup>2301</sup> In the first years of the 1490s he was castellan of Bakva in the service of duke Lawrence Újlaki, the first of the two known instances of his entering someone's *familiaritas*.<sup>2302</sup> In 1492 he was listed fourteenth among the representatives of the Croatian and Slavonian nobility at Buda. As a *familiaris* of Újlaki, he got involved in the conflict between king Wladislaw and the duke in 1494/95,<sup>2303</sup> and was accordingly granted pardon together with his fellow-*familiars* in 1496.<sup>2304</sup> Around 1504 he is referred to as castellan of Berzőce, another local fortification owned by duke Lawrence Újlaki.<sup>2305</sup> He died sometime after 1507.

Nicholas had no son, only three daughters from his wife whose identity is unknown.<sup>2306</sup> Two of them married persons whose families had long been

2296 MNL OL, DL 107 017.

2297 MNL OL, DF 231 576; *Levéltári Közlemények* 13 (1935): 246.

2298 MNL OL, DL 35 575: "Johannes alias comes de Prata tunc vero dominus de Ilova frater noster patruelis," was how Nicholas Tulbertfi recalled his uncle, making reference to the 1440s. DL 33 454 (1491): "Nicolao Thewrbelth de Ilova."

2299 See the chapter on the Latkfi family.

2300 MNL OL, DL 101001.

2301 In fact, Nicholas Tulbert is one of the handful of persons to be titled *egregius* without exception; since he turns up in several dozens of charters, I decided not to give selective references here.

2302 MNL OL, DL 20 035.

2303 On this now see Tamás Fedeles, *A király és a lázadó herceg. Az Újlaki Lőrinc és szövetségesei elleni királyi hadjárat (1494–1495)* [The King and the Rebellious Duke. The Royal Expedition Led against Lawrence Újlaki and his Allies (1494–1495)] (Szeged: Szegedi Középkorász Műhely, 2012).

2304 MNL OL, DL 70 073.

2305 MNL OL, DF 252 248.

2306 Although, as we have seen, he was betrothed with Ursula, daughter of Nicholas Kasztellánfi, this Ursula later turns up as the consort of Stephen Szencsei. Cf. Maček–Jurković, *Rodoslov plemića*, 143.

rooted in the county of Körös. Sophie married Nicholas Kasztellánfi, the son of viceban Acacius.<sup>2307</sup> Ursula became the wife of Nicholas Kerhen, son of another former viceban, Michael Kerhen.<sup>2308</sup> The third daughter, called Catherine, married a man who previously had no possessions in Körös, and was a newcomer in Slavonia as well. Francis Pető of Gerse<sup>2309</sup> was not the son of John, master of the doorkeepers, but that of his cousin, Nicholas, master of the cupbearers.<sup>2310</sup> Among his six sons, Ladislás seems to have been the first to join duke Corvin, and was appointed as his castellan of Medve and Rakonok. He was later followed by his brother, Thomas, with whom he was castellan of Lipovec in 1503. In 1507 Ladislás already possessed the estate of Béla (Bela, CRO) in the county of Varasd.<sup>2311</sup> We do not know when the third brother, Francis joined them, but in 1513 he was surely owning a portion of the Tulbert lands, and not only in the county of Körös, but also in that of Verőce.<sup>2312</sup> He had three sons from his wife, Blaise, Michael and Caspar, but none of them turns up in the later tax registers.

## 2.2.49. Turóci (de Thurocz, Thwroc)

The Turóci family originated from the northern county the name of which they bore.<sup>2313</sup> Their settlement in Slavonia in the middle of the fifteenth century was a result of their relationship with the Cilli family. The sons of Blaise, Paul and Blaise were both members of queen Barbara's entourage in the 1410s, and returned there after the queen's court was reestablished again in the late 1420s.<sup>2314</sup> Presumably it was during the service of the queen that they acquired the estate of Kóka in the county of Pest, of which they were sometimes called later.<sup>2315</sup>

The real founder of the family's wealth and power was Benedict Turóci, one of the sons of Paul.<sup>2316</sup> It was obviously thanks to the role that his father and uncle had played in the court of Barbara that he could join the queen's nephew, count Ulrich of Cilli. He soon became one of the leading *familiars* of

2307 Ibid., 176.

2308 MNL OL, DF 254 528; Borsa, *Balassa család levéltára*, no. 520.

2309 MNL OL, DF 277175/529–31 ecw "Nobilis domina Katherina consors egregii Francisci Pethew de Gersse filia vero egregii quondam Nicolai Thwrbelthffy de Berschanowcz." In 1516 both Nicholas Kerhen and Francis Pető have a castellan of their own in Berstyanóc: DL 101 507.

2310 Engel, *Középkori magyar genealógia*, Nádasd nem 3. tábla Pető (gersei).

2311 MNL OL, DF 231 956, DF 277 043, DF 219 083, DL 46 413, DF 276 840.

2312 Adamček–Kampuš, *Popisi*, 71, 97.

2313 Engel, *Középkori magyar genealógia*, Turóci (Iudbregi).

2314 Engel, *Archontológia*, vol. II, 248., with all their successive offices listed there.

2315 Kóka as the queen's estate: Tringli, "Pest megye," 86. CF. MNL OL, DL 16 483, DL 17 351 (Turóci of Kóka).

2316 For a brief summary of his career see Mályusz, "Magyar rendi állam," 535.

the count, and in April 1441 king Wladislaw engaged himself to hand over the letters of obligation concerning the captivity of Ulrich either to the count himself or in his name to his *familiaris* Benedict Turóci.<sup>2317</sup> He began to accumulate landed wealth immediately after his arrival to Slavonia. Already before 1444 he occupied portions of Komor in the county of Varasd, which had previously been held by Johann Meusenreiter, chancellor of the counts of Cilli.<sup>2318</sup> Sometime after 1446 he received from his lord the castle of Belec in the Zagorje district.<sup>2319</sup>

After the counts of Cilli had taken over the power in Slavonia, he was appointed as one of their vicebans and ispáns of Körös. Before his appointment he was present at the assembly of Buda held in September 1447 as one of the group listed between the barons and the county envoys.<sup>2320</sup> Although he soon had to cede his position as viceban of Slavonia to his more powerful neighbour, John Vitovec, mercenary captain of the counts of Cilli, he was recompensed in the county of Varasd of which he was alispán for several years.<sup>2321</sup> He married Anne, the daughter of Andrew Rohonci, previously also viceban of Slavonia, and thus acquired the important estate of Ludbreg in the county of Körös.<sup>2322</sup> In December 1451 he received from bishop Benedict of Zagreb the episcopal vill of Biskupci, near the castle of Zelnávár, upon the condition of serving the prelate and his successors with four horsemen.<sup>2323</sup>

After his lord, count Ulrich of Cilli had recovered his leading position in the court of young Ladislas V, Benedict also joined the royal entourage.<sup>2324</sup> Even after the assassination of count Ulrich at Belgrade in November 1456, he was left in his office of alispán in Varasd, remained a member of the court,<sup>2325</sup> and was finally appointed as treasurer sometime during 1457.<sup>2326</sup> Despite his obvious attachment to count Ulrich not even the death of king Ladislas in November 1457 and the consequent accession of Matthias Hunyadi to the Hungarian throne proved fatal to his career. In January 1458 he was present among the followers of palatine Ladislas Garai at the meeting of Szeged, where the conditions of the election of Matthias as king of Hungary were

2317 MNL OL, DF 287 163: "prefato comiti Ulrico aut eius nomine egregio Benedicto de Thwroc familiaris suo."

2318 MNL OL, DF 288 125.

2319 Engel, *Archontológia*, vol. I, 276.

2320 Mályusz, "Magyar rendi állam," 535.

2321 Engel, *Archontológia*, vol. I, 225.

2322 Ibid., 363. In fact, the charter referred to by Engel does not prove that the estate was already in the hands of Benedict; it merely attests that he acquired portions of it by right of pledge: MNL OL, DF 261 475. On his wife and the acquisition of Ludbreg see DL 101 814. It was George son of John Ludbregi who "certo juris titulo obligaverat" the estate to Benedict and his wife: DL 101 755.

2323 MNL OL, DF 252402.

2324 Relator of a royal charter at Buda on March 17, 1456: MNL OL, DL 38 855.

2325 MNL OL, DL 15 130.

2326 Soós, *Kincstartók*, 39.

agreed to by Garai and Michael Szilágyi.<sup>2327</sup> He managed to remain on good terms with the new ban of Slavonia, John Vitovec, but persevered on king Matthias's side even after Vitovec had gone over to emperor Frederick in 1459. Indeed, early in 1459 he was one of those persons who escorted the king of Bosnia, on his way from the royal camp at Szeged back to his kingdom, to the Sava river.<sup>2328</sup>

In the spring of 1459 he journeyed to Rome for unknown reasons,<sup>2329</sup> and upon his return he became an increasingly influential member of king Matthias's court. Already in February 1460 we find him at Buda,<sup>2330</sup> and he subsequently followed the king on his campaign to north-eastern Hungary.<sup>2331</sup> In the very beginning of 1461 he was sent from Trencsén (Trenčín, SL) together with the bishop of Veszprém, Ladislás Pálóci, John Rozgonyi and Emeric Hédervári, that is, three of the major officeholders of the realm, to king George of Bohemia in order to bring the matter of Matthias's marriage with the daughter of the Czech king to completion.<sup>2332</sup> At the end of the same month he was again the only one without any office among those barons who guaranteed king George that Matthias would keep his promises concerning the new queen's dower.<sup>2333</sup> Later during the year we see him at Buda again,<sup>2334</sup> and in the autumn he was in the royal campaign that Matthias led against John Jiskra.<sup>2335</sup> After his return he was appointed as ispán of the chamber of Körmöc, and as such titled *magnificus* for the first time. At the same time his brother, Ladislás became castellan of the royal castle of Becse (Torontál c., now Bečej, SRB).<sup>2336</sup>

In 1462 Benedict was appointed as master of the doorkeepers,<sup>2337</sup> the most illustrious among the court dignitaries. In the autumn of 1462 he accompanied his king to Transylvania,<sup>2338</sup> and seems to have spent the whole of the next year by his side in the southern marches of the realm.<sup>2339</sup> He was also present in the expedition against Jajce.<sup>2340</sup> His position in the court is

2327 Teleki, *Hunyadiak kora*, vol. X, 569.

2328 František Palacký, *Urkundliche Beiträge zur Geschichte Böhmens und seiner Nachbarländer im Zeitalter Georgs von Podiebrad* (Fontes Rerum Austriacarum, vol. 2 of 20) (Vienna: Hof und Staatsdruckerei, 1860), 171.

2329 MNL OL, DF 288 158.

2330 MNL OL, DL 73 414.

2331 MNL OL, DF 270 354, DF 270 357.

2332 MNL OL, DF 240 457.

2333 Teleki, *Hunyadiak kora*, vol. XI, 7.

2334 MNL OL, DL 15 586.

2335 MNL OL, DL 15 649.

2336 MNL OL, DF 209 320.

2337 MNL OL, DL 86 392 (July 3, 1462).

2338 Samu Barabás ed., *A római szent birodalmi grófszéki Teleki család oklevéltára* [The Archives of the Teleki of Szék Family, Counts of the Holy Roman Empire], vol II of 2 (Budapest: Athenaeum, 1895), 76–77.

2339 Ibid., 81; MNL OL, DF 233341.

2340 Thallóczy–Barabás, *Frangepán család oklevéltára*, vol. II, 56–60.

perfectly illustrated by the fact that in the conflict which opposed him to John Vitovec and his sons because of the estate of Ludbreg the royal council, with two prelates and three barons among its members, decided in his favour in the king's presence on the way back from Bosnia.<sup>2341</sup> After the coronation king Matthias confirmed Benedict again in the possession of the estate of Ludbreg and its appurtenances, with the stipulation that in the case of his or his son's heirless death the estate would devolve upon his brother Ladislav or his uncle Blaise and their offspring.<sup>2342</sup> In the autumn of 1465 he was again on campaign with king Matthias,<sup>2343</sup> but probably died soon thereafter for he completely disappears from the sources.

The only surviving son of Benedict, George Turóci, is quite an obscure figure, especially in view of his long tenure of a baronial office. The latter is difficult to reconstruct due to the lack of an archontology covering the period. According to the evidence of the lists of officeholders attached to the royal privileges, he became master of the cupbearers nine years after the death of his father, in 1474.<sup>2344</sup> Yet already three years before he issued a charter as "*dapifer et pincernarius*," when he was sent by the king to carry out an arbitration.<sup>2345</sup> It is almost certain, however, that this title cannot be interpreted as "master of the table and of the cupbearers;" we are rather dealing with a court office of an inferior rank. Yet it is certain that he entered the court at an early age, for two royal donations refer to his services there since his adolescence.<sup>2346</sup> In 1476 George was probably a member of the embassy that was sent by king Matthias to Italy for his bride.<sup>2347</sup> Late in 1479 he seems to have lost the mastership of the cupbearers, but by February 1481 at the latest he had recovered the office.<sup>2348</sup> Another break in his officeholding, in the course of 1486–1487, may not be other than an illusion created by the royal charters.<sup>2349</sup> What is certain, however, is that he continued to hold the office even after the accession of Wladislaw II and right until his death,<sup>2350</sup> although,

2341 MNL OL, DL 101 814.

2342 MNL OL, DF 231 494; DL 101 755.

2343 *Zichy család okmánytára*, vol. X, 348–49.

2344 MNL OL, DF 266 099.

2345 MNL OL, DL 62 091.

2346 MNL OL, DL 100 876: "ab adolescencia sua;" DF 209 390: "ab adolescencie sue gradibus."

2347 Albert Berzeviczy ed., *Aragoniai Beatrix magyar királyné életére vonatkozó okiratok* [Documents Relating to the Life of Beatrix of Aragon, Queen of Hungary] (Budapest: MTA, 1914), 28. If the Twroczy listed among the *aulici* is indeed our George, he travelled with five horsemen.

2348 These pieces of information are taken from the archontology of the late medieval Kingdom of Hungary that is currently being prepared at the Institute of History of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences.

2349 Fügedi, *Mobilitás*, 122.

2350 He figures without any title among the barons who concluded the treaty with John Corvin on July 17, 1490. On January 26, 1492 he is relator of a royal charter as *magister pincernarum*: MNL OL, DF 248 044. On February 2, 1492 he is listed among the court dignitaries: DL 39 325.



interestingly enough, he did not always use his title himself, nor was it given to him without exception.<sup>2351</sup> He certainly took part in at least some of the king's campaigns in Moravia and Bohemia.<sup>2352</sup> His long baronial career cannot be automatically regarded as proof of a confidential situation at court, especially if we consider that by this time the court dignities, with the exception of the mastership of the doorkeepers, had lost their significance. In this respect it is worth examining the case of George Turóci parallel with that of William Vitovec. The son of another Slavonian baron, ban John Vitovec, William held the mastership of the table for almost a decade at the same time when Turóci was master of the cupbearers, yet, with one single exception, none of them can be shown to have been active in the royal council.<sup>2353</sup> It is highly characteristic that both before and after his office-holding we find George Turóci among the representatives of the Slavonian nobility, which means that despite the baronial status of his father and his own he remained firmly rooted in the wealthy nobility of his native land. Besides the fact that he was not always titled *magnificus* despite his baronial office, his marriage with Christine Csornai, who belonged to the non-baronial branch of the Oslí kindred, also points in this direction.<sup>2354</sup> Nor did his second wife, Catherine Zalai, belong to a baronial family. Sometime before 1482 he took into pledge the castle of Szigliget (Zala c.) from the Újlaki family, which, however, he was obliged to return to duke Lawrence upon royal orders in that year.<sup>2355</sup> He also put his hands upon certain possessions in the county of Baranya in return for the 6000 florins that duke Corvin owed to him.<sup>2356</sup>

He prepared his last will in April 1492 at Buda. He bequeathed all his hereditary possessions to his nephews, Bernard and Andrew, who were the sons of his brother, Ladislás; nevertheless, his wife, Catherine was allowed to retain the castle of Ludbreg and its appurtenances until she was remarried.<sup>2357</sup> The year before, George Turóci, being unable to pay off his castellan of Belec, had stipulated in a separate charter that his nephews could only enter the

2351 MNL OL, DL 101 125, his own letter from April 28, 1491. Nor is he called *magister pincernarum* and titled simply *egregius* by the convent of Csorna in February 1477 (Imre Nagy, ed., *Sopron vármegye története. Oklevéltár* [The History of Sopron County. Collection of Charters], vol. II, 1412–1653 (Sopron, 1891), 513) and by palatine Michael Ország in July 1482 (Ibid., 538). In March 1482 the king himself titles him *egregius* (DF 233 310), although a month later George calls himself in his own letter *pincernarum magister* (DL 100 969), and so does the chapter of Csázma in June 1482 (DL 101 137). On the other hand, the *magnificus* title is sometimes given to him without indicating his office, such as in 1477 (DL 45 698), or in two letters by Peter Gudovci in 1488 (DF 256 912, DF 255 848).

2352 MNL OL, DF 209 390: “in exercitibus contra fidei et ipsius regni nostri varios hostes.”

2353 Kubinyi, “Bárók a királyi tanácsban,” 208.

2354 As we have seen above, Christine's aunt was married by Ladislás Bocskai.

2355 MNL OL, DF 233 310.

2356 MNL OL, DL 29327. In fact, this debt had been accumulated by Matthias, and inherited by his son.

2357 MNL OL, DL 32399.

castle on condition of first reimbursing the castellan.<sup>2358</sup> Bernard and Andrew did in fact inherit the possessions of their late cousin, whereas those which George had acquired with his consecutive marriages were lost to them. While we know next to nothing about the life of Andrew, Bernard rose to become one of the most esteemed members of the Slavonian nobility.

As far as we know, he started his career as castellan of Medve in the service of duke John Corvin.<sup>2359</sup> Late in 1493 he temporarily left the duke, however, and became one of the Slavonian vicebans of Ladislás Kanizsai.<sup>2360</sup> Yet he did not leave his office together with his lord, but rejoined Corvin and remained his deputy in Slavonia in the company of John Gyulai. At the turn of 1495/1496 he for some reason ceded his place to Stephen Bradács, and in December 1496 he was one of the envoys of the Slavonian nobility at king Władisław II.<sup>2361</sup> In January 1499, and again a year later he was sent by his Slavonian fellow nobles to negotiate with the ruler in matters of importance.<sup>2362</sup> At the same time he also acted as an elected arbitrator in a case between John Ernuszt and the chapter of Csázma, again a sign of local respect.<sup>2363</sup> Sometime during the summer of 1502 he returned as Slavonian viceban in the service of duke John, and remained in the office until the death of his lord. Indeed, upon the death of Corvin he prevented the Slavonian nobility from recognising the new bans appointed by the king, apparently upon the initiative of the late duke's widow, Beatrix Frangepán.<sup>2364</sup> In the same year, however, he was again among the envoys of the Slavonian nobility upon whose request the king transcribed the decrees of the assembly of Rákos.<sup>2365</sup> Consequently, perhaps because of his castle there, he returned definitively to the county of Varasd, as alispán of which he is first attested in 1506, and remained in this office probably until his death, in the service of George of Brandenburg.<sup>2366</sup> He died before 1517, when his widow is mentioned.<sup>2367</sup>

Bernard Turóci married Helen Székely of Kövend, sister of James Székely, from whom he had at least four sons, John, Stephen, George and Blaise.<sup>2368</sup> The eldest, John, followed in the footsteps of his father as alispán of Varasd,

2358 MNL OL, DL 101125.

2359 Tkalčić, *Monumenta*, vol. II, 486.

2360 In view of his preceding and consequent career, the hypothesis can be risked that even as a viceban appointed by Kanizsai he continued to defend the interests of duke Corvin.

2361 Kukuljević, *Jura regni*, part II, 234.

2362 Ibid., 241; MNL OL, DF 268 156.

2363 MNL OL, DF 282 462.

2364 Georgius Pray, *Epistolae procerum regni Hungariae. Pars I.* (Posonii: n.p., MDCCCVI), 51–53.

2365 Kukuljević, *Jura regni*, part II, 255.

2366 *Leváltári Közlemények* 3 (1925): 162–63 (1506); MNL OL, DF 232 453 (1516).

2367 MNL OL, DL 33 075 (1517): "Anthonius Kolar de Belec jobagio domine Elene relicte quondam Bernardi de Thwroc." See also Adamček-Kampuš, *Popisi*, 107 ("orfanorum domini Thwrowczy").

2368 DL 106083/010 ecw.

and survived Mohács, as did Stephen.<sup>2369</sup> Bernard also had a daughter called Catherine. The only surviving child of Andrew, the brother of Bernard, seems to have been Anne, who married Ladislas Ostfi of Asszonyfalva. He was the brother of Francis Ostfi, who, as mentioned above, married from the Vitéz of Kamarca family. It is impossible to tell with certainty what motivated this double marriage of the Ostfi brothers, mainly based in the northwestern regions of Hungary, in the county of Körös.<sup>2370</sup> Bernard and Andrew also had a sister who was married by an Austrian nobleman, Veit von Puchheim. At the very end of the sixteenth century Benedict Turóci was created a baron and thus elevated into the aristocracy.<sup>2371</sup>

### 2.2.50. Vojkfi/Garázda

(Voykfy, de Woykowcz/Garazda de Kerezthwr, Garazdyncz)

The Vojk kindred allegedly received the land between the rivers Tapolca/Toplica and Peker from Saint Stephen with the purpose of populating it;<sup>2372</sup> it was in all probability with reference to this charter that Bónis described master Nicholas Vojkfi as having descended from one of the oldest kindreds of Slavonia.<sup>2373</sup> Karácsonyi maintained that they were of “Southern Slav” origins, apparently basing his hypothesis upon the name of the kindred, although he did not list them among the “Slavonian” kindreds.<sup>2374</sup> It should be remarked that the persons enumerated in the earliest charter which refer to them bear no Slavic-sounding names at all, and their estate was from the outset known by the Hungarian name Szentkereszt/Keresztúr.<sup>2375</sup> What is beyond doubt is that the lands of the kindred lay in the immediate vicinity of those of the Tétény kindred and of the future estate of Kristallóc, and must have been of quite considerable extent originally, as can be judged from the fact that they were shared by a great number of families in the later middle ages. Anyway, the reference to Saint Stephen may mean that they were originally castle warriors (*várjobbágyok*), as were at least part of the people who possessed the neighbouring estate of Tapolca/Kristallóc, but the possibility that they were newcomers like the Tétény cannot be excluded either.

2369 Adamček–Kampuš, *Popisi*, 137 (John), 161 (Stephen). MNL OL, DF 276 888, DL 68 743, DL 68 746 (John alispán of Varasd).

2370 See below the section on the Osli kindred.

2371 MNL OL, Libri regii, vol. 5, 335–37.

2372 Wenzel, *Árpádkori Új Okmánytár*, vol. VI, 457–60.

2373 Bónis, *Jogtudó értelmiség*, 372.

2374 Karácsonyi, *Magyar nemzetségek*, 1051.

2375 It is worth comparing with the neighbouring Kristallóc, which, as we have seen above, was originally called Toplica, and was later rebaptised after comes Cristol in the equally Slavic form of Kristalo(v)c.

However, the problem of which families belonged to the kindred, or, rather, which shared the lands originally belonging to it, is difficult to solve. Csánki enumerated half a dozen such families, most of which, like the Dur of Durovc and the Bojnik of Bojnikovc, belonged to the petty nobility in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, and played no role outside their immediate vicinity.<sup>2376</sup> The case is different with the Garázda, who shared the lands of the Vojk kindred without any doubt, but who present nevertheless serious problems. The whole estate seems to have been organised around the church of the Holy Cross,<sup>2377</sup> clearly connected to the kindred of which it bore the name.<sup>2378</sup> Yet it was also known as *Garazdinckeresztúr*, which induced Csánki and Engel, apparently with reason, to regard the Garázda as well as a family that descended from the Vojk kindred. Pál Engel distinguished at least two Garázda families, one which he treated as one among those belonging to the Vojk kindred, and another represented by James Garázda.<sup>2379</sup> In fact, the latter, the son of Blaise Csernarekai, belonged in all probability to the same kindred, a conjecture that is underpinned by the fact that the estate of Csernareka also bordered upon Kristallóc.<sup>2380</sup> That the Garázda of Istvándi, in the county of Somogy, originally also came from Körös is proved by the fact that as late as 1453 Blaise Garázda of Istvándi still owned portions of Garazdinc.<sup>2381</sup> The exact descent of the different members of the kindred is difficult to establish, however. The first to be called Garázda was Peter, son of Andrew (Endre), who first appears in 1358 with his five brothers as belonging to the Vojk kindred.<sup>2382</sup> That the Peter Garázda who is referred to as a royal man in 1363 precisely in connection with Kristallóc is identical with the Peter mentioned five years before is made evident by the names of his father and brother.<sup>2383</sup> In 1385 Andrew, provost of Hánta, Stephen, Ladislav, Lőkös (Lewkus), John, Thomas, Peter, Denis, Emeric, Nicholas and another Ladislav, “*nobiles dicti Garazda*,” appear together with the Pekri kindred as patrons of the church of Holy Cross at Mecsenicemelléki (*Medchenichamelleky*).<sup>2384</sup> Another Garázda, namely Nicholas, provost of Csanád in the late fourteenth century, should also be linked to the Garázda of Keresztúr.<sup>2385</sup> The two

2376 Csánki, *Körösmegye*, 47.

2377 MNL OL, DL 101 952 (1404): “Woykowcz ad Sanctam Crucem spectantis;” DL 15 200 (1457): “ad [...] ecclesiam parochialem Woykkerezthur vocatam pertinentes.”

2378 MNL OL, DL 100 761 (1466): “Voykouczkerezthwr;” DF 268 149 (1499): “Woykkerezthwr.”

2379 Engel, *Archontológia*, vol. II, 81–82.

2380 MNL OL, DL 106 942.

2381 MNL OL, DL 106 832.

2382 MNL OL, DF 283 655: “Andak filius Endre nobilis de genere Woyk,” his brothers are called Peter, Stephen, John, Nicholas and Bako (Bakow).

2383 MNL OL, DL 33 610. Cf. Smičklas, *Codex diplomaticus*, vol. XIII, 322, where his father is misread as Side.

2384 MNL OL, DL 66 544.

2385 The village of Fenék (Somogy c.), which is mentioned in the possession of Paul Garázda in 1457 seems to be identical with the Fenék from the acquisition of which provost Nicholas

provostships, as well as the joint appearance together with the Pekri suggest that already by the last third of the fourteenth century the Garázda were above the level of the petty nobility; indeed, it may have been a marriage alliance between the Garázda branch of the Vojk kindred and the neighbouring Pekri that made possible for the Garázda the social rise which removed some of them at least definitively from Slavonia. It is very probable that the Denis Garázda of Mecsenice (*Mechyncze*), who received in 1409 a common coat of arms with his kinsman, Nicholas Garázda of Mecsenice,<sup>2386</sup> and Ladislás Szilágyi,<sup>2387</sup> and was alispán of Somogy in 1408–1410,<sup>2388</sup> was the son of master Peter Garázda, son of Andrew; he received together with his brother Peter lands in the counties of Zala and Tolna, among them parts of Apar, of which his descendants were sometimes called.<sup>2389</sup> Nicholas Garázda himself may be identical with the Nicholas who appears in 1385; he joined John Maróti, served him first as alispán of Tolna, then, as mentioned above, became castellan of Szrebernik (Srebrenik, BIH). In 1419 he was confirmed in the possession of Lak (Tolna c.), and in 1427 he received as a special court *familiaris* a minor royal donation in the the same county.<sup>2390</sup> He was then called of Horogszeg, in the county of Temes, which he had likewise received from Sigismund together with Ladislás Szilágyi.<sup>2391</sup> In 1443 one of his two sons called Blaise was still owning parts of Horogszeg.<sup>2392</sup> This Blaise, or his brother and namesake, was part of the king's entourage in Italy in 1433 as a "noble baron and knight," and later functioned as alispán of Temes in the service of the Marcali brothers.<sup>2393</sup> He was called of Lak and Istvándi alternately, and in the latter village he erected a *castellum*.<sup>2394</sup> All of these

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Garázda is inhibited in 1371, even if in this latter case the village is said to lay in the county of Baranya: MNL OL, DL 87 458, DL 15 200.

2386 Mecsenice seems originally to have been of quite considerable extent, called a *districtus* as late as 1470 (MNL OL, DF 255 815). Part of it was surely owned by the Berivojszentiváni family (*Zsigmondkori Oklevéltár*, vol. X, no. 871, DL 100 882), which, as we have seen, was certainly of castle warrior (*várjobbágy*) origins. Moreover, the village of Podlusja (Podlwsya), which is mentioned as owned by Stephen Garázda in 1457, also turns up in the possession of the Berivojszentiváni family (DL 15 200, DL 100 896, cf. also DF 279 513). Together with Csernareka, Mecsenice also figures among the appurtenances of Kristallóc in 1471, but this is surely a later development (DL 100 807).

2387 Barabás, *Teleki család oklevéltára*, vol. I, 345–49.

2388 Engel, *Archontológia*, vol. II, 81.

2389 *Zsigmondkori Oklevéltár*, vol. I, no. 5301.

2390 1419: *Hazai Okmánytár*, vol. IV, 277. It is worth remarking that the possession of Lak was then said to have been held already by the ancestors of Nicholas as well. 1427: MNL OL, DF 209 255.

2391 Csánki, *Történelmi földrajz*, vol. II, 89.

2392 MNL OL, DL 59 275.

2393 Pál Lukcsics ed., *XV. századi pápák oklevelei* [Papal Charters from the Fifteenth Century], vol. II of 2 (Budapest: MTA, 1931–1938), 200; Engel, *Archontológia*, vol. II, 81.

2394 MNL OL, DL 106 832.

members of the Garázda family seem to have left Slavonia for good,<sup>2395</sup> although Blaise still owned parts of Garazdinc in 1446, and in 1454 his own son, equally called Blaise, quarrelled with John Nábrádi, that is, because of Kristallóc.<sup>2396</sup> George Garázda, who appears as alispán of Somogy and ispán of Körös in the service of the same Marcali family,<sup>2397</sup> may have been the son or brother of Denis; that he belonged to the same family is clearly proved by the fact of his being called of Istváandi.

It is conspicuous that all the other persons who turn up as belonging to the Vojk kindred (*de genere Woyk*), are more numerous and of a markedly more inferior social rank than the Garázda seem to have been. They merely appear as designated royal men or lawyers, none of them a mark of esteem, as frequently emphasised so far.<sup>2398</sup> Yet one of them is especially interesting for us, namely the man called Paul son of Ivan of the Vojk kindred who appears in 1378, for he can certainly be identified as the Paul son of Ivan of Mecsénice (*Medsenicha*) who acted as a royal man three years earlier.<sup>2399</sup> In 1358, a certain Nicholas son of Benedict of Mecsénice (*Mechchenche*) turns up together with the sons of Andrew. These pieces of information, together with the fact that the Garázda were occasionally called of Mecsénice, help to attach Mathusel Mecsencei, son of Adam, who was one of the vicebans of Paul Csopor,<sup>2400</sup> to the Vojk kindred. Indeed, his father can surely be identified as the master Adam *litteratus* who was szolgabíró of Körös in the 1370s, and in 1371 even emerges as the deputy of Ugrin, ispán of Körös, and notary of the county.<sup>2401</sup>

We are in an even more difficult situation with regard to those families which remained in the county of Körös in the late middle ages; we should begin with the persons called Garázda. As stated above, those members of the kindred who relocated themselves outside Slavonia continued to hold portions of the kindred's estates there, whereas others apparently continued to reside in Körös. First of all, the Paul, son of Stephen of Keresztúr,<sup>2402</sup> who in 1466 pledged five tenant plots on the appurtenances of Kristallóc and was then called of Vojkovckeresztúr.<sup>2403</sup> He turns up as royal man and as a

2395 All of them are called of their new possessions in the counties of Zala, Somogy and Tolna, and never of their ancient possessions in Körös. The known marriages of the kindred also seem to prove that their social network shifted definitively away from Slavonia (See MNL OL, DF 233 104, DF 209 273, DF 209 285).

2396 MNL OL, DL 100 643.

2397 Engel: *Archontológia*, vol. I, 177 (alispán of Somogy); *Zsigmondkori Oklevéltár*, vol. VII, no. 70 (ispán of Körös); *ibid.*, no. 1354 (in Italy).

2398 MNL OL, DL 100 151, DL 103 343, *Levéltári Közlemények* 9 (1931): 288, 289, MNL OL, DL 100 258, *Zsigmondkori Oklevéltár*, vol. XI, no. 165.

2399 Smičiklas, *Codex diplomaticus*, vol. XV, 166.

2400 Engel, *Archontológia*, vol. I, 20.

2401 Engel, *Archontológia*, vol. I, 254. MNL OL, DL 103 342 (1376): "nobilem virum magistrum Adam litteratum notarium et unum ex nobis iudicibus nobilium."

2402 MNL OL, DL 15 200.

2403 MNL OL, DL 100 761.



neighbour with regard to Kristallóc, and we know that his daughter, Dorothy, was married first to John Vidfi of Korbova, and then to Francis Pekri.<sup>2404</sup> At the same time we meet Matthew (Matheus) and John Garázda of Garazdinc, both apparently in the service of the Fánacs of Gordova family.<sup>2405</sup> This Matthew was equally called of Csázmafő (*Chasmafew*),<sup>2406</sup> for he was the son of Emeric Garázda, presumably a brother of Nicholas, and of the daughter of Denis of Csázmafő.<sup>2407</sup> John was apparently his son, who also turns up as a royal man in 1470.<sup>2408</sup> In 1495 the possession of Garazdinc, with more than 30 inhabited tenant plots, was shared by Nicholas and Ladislás Garázda,<sup>2409</sup> the first, as we have seen above, was castellan of Zelina and later alispán of Pozsega, whereas the latter merely appears as royal man.<sup>2410</sup> It is not known what relationship existed between them and Michael Garázda of Garazdinc who appears in 1507 with a mere 3 plots at Garazdinc, Ladislás having but one.<sup>2411</sup> This Michael surely belonged to the same Garázda family,<sup>2412</sup> and spent as many as ten years, in two terms, in office as szolgabíró of the county of Körös.<sup>2413</sup> In 1525 Emeric Garázda is attested as owning parts of Garazdinc.<sup>2414</sup>

The Csernarekai family, which seems to have descended from the Blaise whose son Philip was sentenced for infidelity in 1394, also continued to play some role in Körös in the fifteenth century. The son of Philip, James Garázda, made a career in the service of Pipo Ozorai,<sup>2415</sup> and may even have constructed a *castellum* at Csernareka.<sup>2416</sup> He married from the county of Tolna, and was equally called Móri after the estate he had thus acquired.<sup>2417</sup> It is impossible to tell whether the Caspar Csernarekai who turns up in the 1470s was his son, and whether Peter Csernarekai who is mentioned once as a neighbour, and appears as royal man and a notary of the court in the 1490s was his brother or

2404 MNL OL, DL 15 200, DL 34 333, DF 277 175/305–11 ecw.

2405 MNL OL, DF 255 767, DF 255 594.

2406 *Levéltári Közlemények* 3 (1925): 107 (1449): among the neighbours of Csázmafő: "Mathia Garazda de dicta Chasmafew."

2407 *Zsigmondkori Oklevéltár*, vol. IV, no. 71.

2408 MNL OL, DL 107 005.

2409 Adamček–Kampuš, *Popisi*, 11.

2410 MNL OL, DF 261 977.

2411 Adamček–Kampuš, *Popisi*, 31.

2412 The village of Farkasovc, where he was listed wirth seven plots in 1507 (*ibid.*, 29) was stated by Dorothy Garázda to be her hereditary land in 1523 (MNL OL, DL 34 333).

2413 MNL OL, DL 107 125 (1500), DL 101 393 (1504), DL 46 830 (1507), DF 279 477 (1512).

2414 MNL OL, DF 233 306.

2415 Engel, *Archontológia*, vol. II 81–82.

2416 MNL OL, DL 106 788 (1454): "Emerico Mraaz castellano Jacobi Garazda de Chernareka."

2417 Ferenc Szakály, *Ami Tolna vármegye középkori okleveleiből megmaradt 1314–1525* [The Remaining Medieval Charters of the Authorities of Tolna County 1314–1525], (Szekszárd: Wosinszky Mór Múzeum, 1998), 135. He also turns up as Szentkirályi, the reason of which seems to be that the parish church at Csernareka was dedicated to Saint Stephen: MNL OL, DL 104 040.

other relative.<sup>2418</sup> What is sure is that this Caspar, once called Bedegey, was regularly titled *egregius*,<sup>2419</sup> and was proscribed in 1481 as a *familiaris* of archbishop John Vitéz.<sup>2420</sup> His wife had portions together with that of Valentine Pálfi in some villages in the county of Verőce.<sup>2421</sup> In 1522 we hear of Matthias Csernarekai and his son Ladislás, but, unlike Caspar, they remain no more than simple names for us.<sup>2422</sup>

This is not the case with master Nicholas Vojkfi of Vojkovc,<sup>2423</sup> who certainly belonged to the Vojk kindred.<sup>2424</sup> He was the son of Sandrin, son of Nicholas; it is in itself indicative that we know nothing about his father, who cannot be linked to the several persons who turn up as belonging to the Vojk kindred until the 1420s.<sup>2425</sup> Master Nicholas himself was a notary in the royal chancellery in the late 1480s, and it was as such that he received from king Matthias in 1489 the royal right in the estate and *castellum* of Mogor, then in the possession of Ladislás Hermanfi.<sup>2426</sup> Although the latter contradicted to the introduction, the scale of the donation itself, unusual for a simple notary, suggests that master Nicholas had influential patrons in the court. Hermanfi in his testament allotted some villages that he had bought from other members of the Vojk kindred to master Nicholas, and Balthasar Batthyány complied with the last will of his stepfather.<sup>2427</sup> After 1491 he disappears from sight for some years, but his authority continued to grow in the meantime, for when he emerges again in 1495 he is already one of the arbitrators between George Kasztellánfi and Francis Beriszló.<sup>2428</sup> Moreover, in the next year he was one of the Slavonian envoys (together with Bernard Turóci and George Kapitánfi) dispatched to king Wladislaw II in the matter of the Slavonian coat of arms.<sup>2429</sup> Sometime before September 1498 he was elected as Slavonian deputy-prothonotary, and a few months later he was already titled as prothonotary.<sup>2430</sup> Still as deputy he mediated upon royal orders between duke Lawrence Újlaki and Nicholas Bánfi, whereas in February 1499 he was again one of the envoys

2418 MNL OL, DL 33 453 (together with Caspar); Bónis, *Jogtudó értelmiség*, 400.

2419 MNL OL, DL 103 823, DL 33 454, DL 106 865.

2420 Tringli, "Szlavóniai közgyűlés," 316.

2421 Adamček-Kampuš, *Popisi*, 71.

2422 MNL OL, DF 255 589.

2423 His career was briefly summarised by Bónis, *Jogtudó értelmiség*, 372–73.

2424 MNL OL, DL 101 124, where Peter Bajnok and John Dur, as well as master Nicholas Vojkfi are referred to as "fratres avitici." In 1430 John Dur is expressly mentioned as of the Vojk kindred (DL 100 473: "Johannes Dur de genere Woyk de Kerezthur").

2425 One possible exception is the Nicholas whose son, Bartholomew turns up as a royal man in 1424. He may have had another son called Sandrin. *Zsigmondkori Oklevéltár*, vol. X, no. 871.

2426 MNL OL, DL 102 242.

2427 MNL OL, DL 101 124.

2428 MNL OL, DF 231 944.

2429 Kukuljević, *Iura regni*, part II, 234.

2430 MNL OL, DF 255 940, DF 275 023, DF 276 989, all banal charters dated at Vojkovc, Sept 13, 1498; Kukuljević, *Iura regni*, part II, 241 (prothonotary, Feb 4, 1499).

of the Slavonian nobility before the king, and in April he was the Slavonian delegate appointed to assist the royal tax collector, Benedict Vémeri.<sup>2431</sup>

In September 1499 he was member in the illustrious company of several barons and magnates of a jury which was sent out to decide in a case opposing duke John Corvin and James Székely, and behind him king Maximilian himself.<sup>2432</sup> Shortly thereafter he was commissioned by the king to restore the lands of George Szencsei, and in January 1500 he again appeared as one of the Slavonian envoys at the assembly of Buda.<sup>2433</sup> Still in the same year he accomplished an inquisition upon royal orders among the people of the estate of Atyina about the exactions levied by Elias Bosnyák in the preceding years.<sup>2434</sup> Although we know of no major acquisitions of land by master Nicholas, he surely constructed a *castellum* on his estate of Vojkocv,<sup>2435</sup> where the banal charters were issued during his officeholding as prothonotary. We do not know for sure which family his wife called Justine came from; yet there is a strong probability that she was in fact the daughter of Nicholas Batthyány, which again would be a sign of his enhanced prestige.<sup>2436</sup> If our hypothesis is true, the further rise of master Nicholas was only cut short by his untimely death in 1504.<sup>2437</sup> He does not seem to have left offspring.

### 2.2.51. Other families

Finally, I have grouped together some families/persons who all thanked their settlement in Slavonia to the counts of Cilli, yet individually we know too little about them to treat them in separate “biographies”. In the order of their settlement in Slavonia the first to mention is the *Rohonci* family. Andrew Rohonci descended from the illustrious Kőszegi kindred, and had been the lord of two castles, those of Rohonc and Kemend, until he lost both when he was involved on the losing side in the revolt against king Sigismund in 1403.<sup>2438</sup> Consequently he joined count Herman of Cilli, whom he served for several years as his alispán of Varasd, and became his viceban of Slavonia in

2431 *Somogy Megye Múltjából* 14 (1983), no. 148; Kukuljević, *Iura regni*, part II, 241, 242–43.

2432 MNL OL, DL 37 730, DL 37 731.

2433 MNL OL, DF 268 149; DF 268 156.

2434 MNL OL, DF 268 148.

2435 Although the *castellum* is first mentioned after the death of master Nicholas (1517: “castelli Zenthkerezth alio nomine Woykowschyna nuncupati,” MNL OL, DL 101 519), in view of his career it is very probable that its construction should be attributed to him.

2436 In May 1504 the widow of Nicholas Vojkfi was called Justine (Iványi, *Memorabiliák*, 27, no. 39), and we have seen above that Paul Čavlović, whose wife was Justine Batthyány, inherited the lands of master Nicholas. It is thus reasonable to presume that it was with the hands of the widow that he acquired Vojkocv.

2437 He was drowned in the Danube in the course of an assembly.

2438 Engel, *Királyi hatalom*, 44–45.

1423.<sup>2439</sup> He was able to take into pledge the estate of Ludbreg in 1421, and acquired by the same means that of Bisztrica (Bistrica) in the county of Zagreb.<sup>2440</sup> His son, Stephen, was member of the entourage of Sigismund in Italy in 1433, and seems to have remained close to the imperial court thereafter.<sup>2441</sup> In 1438 he took into pledge the estate of Szlavina from Ladislav Hagymás for 1000 florins,<sup>2442</sup> and also tried, together with his relatives, to secure the future heritage of John Ost.<sup>2443</sup> In the civil war which followed the death of king Albert he served count Herman's grandson, Ulrich of Cilli, as one of his captains.<sup>2444</sup> In the beginning he briefly reoccupied, together with his nephew John Kakas, the family castle at Kemend, but lost it soon afterwards.<sup>2445</sup> He died heirless, and thus the family became extinct on the male line, since John Kakas disappeared without trace after 1441.<sup>2446</sup> Yet the daughters of Andrew played an important role locally in the struggle for the inheritance of their father, as we have seen above in connection with the Szencsei and Turóci families.

One of the foreign *familiares* who owed his establishment in the county of Körös to the counts of Cilli was *Christoph Paschingar*. Apparently he came from the locality in Upper Austria whose name he bore. We know of no office that he held in the service of his lord; nevertheless, at least according to the words of the royal charter which declared him an inhabitant (*regnicola*) of the Slavonian realm,<sup>2447</sup> he must have belonged to the immediate entourage of count Ulrich, for he followed together with him the royal court. He married Susan, the daughter of Ladislav Pekri, and thus obtained portions in the estate of Garignica, though the backing he received from his lord as ban of Slavonia was also instrumental in his acquisition. After the death of count Ulrich he joined the royal court and became a *familiaris* of young Ladislav V.<sup>2448</sup> Later on, however, he seems to have fallen out with the new master of Slavonia, John Vitovec, which resulted in his mutilation and death.<sup>2449</sup> It was with the hand of his daughter from Susan Pekri that Nicholas Pozsegai inherited the estate of Garignica.

2439 Engel, *Archontológia*, vol. II, 205.

2440 Ibid., vol. I, 363; Engel, *Királyi hatalom*, 98.

2441 Csukovits, "Nagy utazás," 34; In 1442 he still called himself "aule imperialis maiestatis miles." MNL OL, DF 231 301.

2442 MNL OL, DL 44 211.

2443 MNL OL, DL 86 358.

2444 MNL OL, DL 103 595.

2445 *Zala vármegye története*, vol. II, 506–07.

2446 The Andrew who figures as Stephen's son at Engel (*Középkori magyar genealógia*, Héder nem 4. tábla: Kőszegi (és Rohonci), belongs in fact to the other Ludbregi family (ibid., Ludbregi (Csúz).

2447 MNL OL, DL 100 623.

2448 MNL OL, DL 102 136.

2449 MNL OL, DL 103 671.

The *Piers* (Pyers) family probably arrived from Treun in Styria.<sup>2450</sup> Of the two brothers, George and Caspar, it is the first who apparently played a more important role. After the occupation of Slavonia by the counts of Cilli 1445, he was at first castellan of Hrasztovica and captain of Csázma. From 1448 he served his lords as alispán of Varasd, and parallelly commanded the castles of Trakostyán and Gornec. From 1451 he governed the equally important castle of Kemlék, presumably until the death of count Ulrich in 1456. His brother, Caspar, was castellan of Szentgyörgy, and although he is attested as such only in the late 1440s, he may have served there from 1445 until 1456.<sup>2451</sup> In 1449 they took into pledge some of the Kamarcai lands from the widow of Ladislav Koreni,<sup>2452</sup> but a more important acquisition was the estate of Szobocsina which came to George through his marriage with Elisabeth Szobocsinai.<sup>2453</sup> After the extinction of the counts of Cilli George Piers served for some time John Vitovec. His only known child from Elisabeth was Dorothy,<sup>2454</sup> who, as we have seen above, gradually lost much of Szobocsina to the Ervencei brothers and Ladislav Hermanfi.

Another foreigner established in the county of Körös by the counts of Cilli was Wolfgang *Frodnacher*. He belonged in all probability to the Austrian Frodnacher family,<sup>2455</sup> and received from his lord, Ulrich of Cilli, the estate of Bednya with the *castellum* there.<sup>2456</sup> We do not know whether he was related to Eustach Frodnacher who was arrested together with the Hunyadi brothers and their supporters in March 1457.<sup>2457</sup> Whatever the case, in May 1457 he was confirmed by king Ladislav in his estate of Bednya.<sup>2458</sup> Unlike other *familiares* of the counts of Cilli, he does not seem to have transferred his allegiance to John Vitovec, which may explain that he remained on good terms with king Matthias as well. In 1471 he received for his services three villages which he had previously given to a certain Lausinger but were confiscated from him for infidelity.<sup>2459</sup> He died before 1478, and left three sons, Raphael, John and

2450 See *Levéltári Közlemények* 3 (1925), 130 (1505): “Sigismundus Pyers de Threwen,” captain of Möttling in der Krain.

2451 Engel, *Archontológia*, vol II, 195.

2452 MNL OL, DF 231 246.

2453 MNL OL, DL 103 642, DL 103 654.

2454 MNL OL, DL 103 727; DL 103 804.

2455 Paul-Joachim Heinig, *Kaiser Friedrich III (1440–1493). Hof, Regierung und Politik*, 3 vols. (Cologne–Weimar–Vienna: Böhlau, 1997), vol. I, 45 and 427. Most recently see Vedran Klaužer, “Plemićka obitelj Frodnacher–ogranak Bednjanski (de Bednya). Aktivnosti članova ogranka u Hrvatsko–Ugarskom Kraljevstvu u drugoj polovici 15. i početkom 16. stoljeća” [The Noble Family Frodnacher, called of Bednya. The Activities of its Members in the Hungaro–Croatian Kingdom in the Second Half of the Fifteenth Century and the Beginning of the Sixteenth], *Godišnjak Njemačke Zajednice/DG Jahrbuch* 19 (2012), 31–43.

2456 MNL OL, DF 233 110.

2457 Kubinyi, *Mátyás király*, 22.

2458 MNL OL, DF 233 110.

2459 MNL OL, DF 231 593.

Sigismund.<sup>2460</sup> They were at first tutored by their *sororius*, Christoph Hochburger, who was the adoptive brother of George Forster.<sup>2461</sup> Raphael died before 1497, and only the career of Sigismund can be followed with some detail: in 1512 he was the *familiaris* of John Ernuszt,<sup>2462</sup> and between 1517 and 1520 he was captain of Medve and Rakonok in the service of George, margrave of Brandenburg.<sup>2463</sup> Although there is no trace of the family in the Slavonian tax lists after 1526, they apparently only disappeared after the middle of the sixteenth century.<sup>2464</sup>

Probably also "imported" by the counts of Cilli were the *Fodorovci*. Gregory, son of Andrew of Adi, first appears as the dapifer of bishop Eberhard of Zagreb in 1410, when he received the *predium* called Fodorovc in the episcopal district of Szentmihály.<sup>2465</sup> We do not know where he came from, but the fact that he and his descendants were consequently called exclusively of their *predium* shows that their origins must have been quite modest. Yet the son of Gregory, equally called Gregory, already achieved some prominence, for it was as an *egregius* that in 1446 he received from the counts of Cilli the village of Borkovc by the castle of Belec in reward of his services that he had performed since his youth.<sup>2466</sup> In 1451 the same Gregory took into pledge some 25 tenant plots together with other pieces of property along the Kamarja river, and was again titled *egregius* on that occasion; he also acquired there a *curia nobilitaris*.<sup>2467</sup> He was among those Cilli *familiares* who after 1456 went over to John Vitovec, and in 1458 he received a royal donation from king Matthias for his efforts in helping to establish the peace of the kingdom.<sup>2468</sup> Later on he seems to have followed Vitovec into rebellion and served the ban as his ispán of Zagreb for some time, and was accordingly pardoned in 1463 among his *familiares*.<sup>2469</sup> In 1464 king Matthias confirmed him in the possession of Borkovc, and again called him *egregius*.<sup>2470</sup>

The son of Gregory, Ladislav, never received the title, and in general emerges as a much more obscure figure than his father had been. He is not recorded to have had lands outside Fodorovc itself and Borkovc, and is only

2460 MNL OL, DF 262 127.

2461 MNL OL, DL 102 275.

2462 MNL OL, DL 106 083.

2463 MNL OL, DL 38 000; DF 252 288; DL 38 049.

2464 Klaužer, "Plemićka obitelj Frodnacher," 41.

2465 "Gregorius filius Andree filii Davoth de Adi dapifer noster" (of bishop Eberhard) receives the *predium* Fodorouch: Lukinović, *Povijesni spomenici*, vol. V, 341. This possession should be distinguished from the village equally called Fodorovc which lay in the county of Varasd.

2466 MNL OL, DF 231 253.

2467 MNL OL, DL 100 607.

2468 MNL OL, DF 252 413: "fidelis nostri egregii Gregorii de Fodorowch militis nobilis regni nostri Sclavonie."

2469 MNL OL, DF 233 405.

2470 MNL OL, DF 231 281.



attested as a royal man.<sup>2471</sup> The same is true of his own son called John, who, however, occurs in the 1510s as *szolgabíró* of Varasd.<sup>2472</sup> The family surely survived Mohács.<sup>2473</sup>

A very special case is presented by the *Osli kindred*, who apparently represented themselves with two families in the noble élite of the county of Körös. The kindred was originally settled in the county of Sopron, from where they expanded southwards and acquired lands throughout modern Transdanubia. *Comes* Osli already had possessions in the county of Varasd in 1225, and it was one of his sons called Herbord who received the land known as Raszinya which came to be named Herbortya thereafter.<sup>2474</sup> Despite the fact that his descendants generally, although by no means exclusively, bore the name of Herbortya, they are not remembered to have played any role south of the Drava river before the fifteenth century. Herbortya, moreover, was shared with another branch of the kindred, namely the descendants of Dominic, ban of Macsó, later called Ostfi of Asszonyfalva, whereas the Ost of Herbortya retained their share in the family patrimony in the county of Sopron.<sup>2475</sup> This undivided possession is all the more interesting since it apparently did not include either the Kanizsai and Csornai families, who were related to the Ost of Herbortya by the same degree as the Ostfi, only the Bresztolci family, the closest kinsmen of the latter, since they also descended from ban Dominic.<sup>2476</sup>

Among the Ost of Herbortya it is precisely the last male member, John son of Francis, who can be linked somewhat more closely to the county of Körös. He seems to have resided at Herbortya,<sup>2477</sup> although he most frequently appears in connection with the family lands in Sopron together with his kinsmen from the Ostfi family. For some time he belonged to the royal court in the 1410s,<sup>2478</sup> and, as we have seen above, it was upon the request of Michael Raveni and John Ost that in 1430 king Sigismund relieved the castle nobles of Kemlék and their lands of their traditional dependence.<sup>2479</sup> His condivisional kinsman, Ladislás son of Francis, despite the family's involvement in the revolt of 1403, rose to become *ispán* of Sopron in the 1430s, and was even

2471 MNL OL, DF 219 010, DF 275 019.

2472 MNL OL, DL 22 548; DF 219 231, DF 279 464.

2473 In 1566 Melchior Fodoróczy is listed at Borkovc: Adamček–Kampuš, *Popisi*, 195. See also MNL OL, Libri regii, vol. 2, 297, vol. 3, 344, 621.

2474 Karácsonyi, *Magyar nemzetségek*, 858–63.

2475 MNL OL, DL 86 306, DL 86 308, DL 86 315, DL 86 358, and a lot more charters in the Ostffy archives. In 1451 John Ost of Herbortya wants to alienate lands in the county of Sopron: *Sopron vármegye története*, vol. II, 370–71; *ibid.*, 379–80.

2476 Engel, *Középkori Magyar Genealógia*, Osli nem 1. tábla: elágazás; 3. tábla: Ostfi (asszonyfalvi).

2477 We have at least two letters of him and his wife, one dated at Szobotica (MNL OL, DL 56 771 [1435]), the other at Herbortya itself (DL 15 284 [1448]).

2478 Engel, *Archontológia*, vol. II, 179.

2479 MNL OL, DF 233 120.

knight of the court in 1439.<sup>2480</sup> In 1455 his son, Francis, received from king Ladislas V for his services the entire inheritance of John Ost, that is, the estate of Herbortya in the county of Körös and four villages in that of Sopron.<sup>2481</sup> These lands, however, eventually devolved upon the Pogány family with the hands of Barbara Ost, who, as we have already seen, also acquired the Ostfi lands in the county of Zala by right of pledge. Although the Ostfi were consequently regarded as a noble family basically located in Sopron and Vas, where they boasted a fortification as well,<sup>2482</sup> they did not completely abandon all interests in the equally ancient family lands in Körös.

That it was so is proved by their marriages. At first, Euphrosyne, the daughter of Ladislas son of Ladislas, married George Ósi, who, although originally from Baranya, did acquire some lands in Körös as well. After his death Euphrosyne married George Kasztellánfi, and, since she was occasionally called of Zselnyak, she certainly resided in Körös together with her sons born from George.<sup>2483</sup> Whether the first of her marriages was instrumental in the making of another one, that of Francis Ostfi with Veronica Vitéz of Kamarca, is at least dubious, for the exact time when these marriages took place cannot be established. Francis was the brother of Euphrosyne, and in 1496 he was already the husband of Veronica, for then John Vitéz, bishop of Veszprém, called him his *sororius*.<sup>2484</sup> Since another Ostfi, Nicholas, is attested as canon of Várad in 1493,<sup>2485</sup> this reveals a further link between the two families,<sup>2486</sup> although in this case again we do not know whether his appearance at Várad preceded or followed the marriage of Francis. Francis himself was member of the queen's court in the 1480s, then became at first alispán, then ispán of Sopron,<sup>2487</sup> his brother, Ladislas, once tax collector in the county of Vas,<sup>2488</sup> and none of the two apparently ever resided in Slavonia. Nevertheless, this Ladislas likewise married from there by taking the daughter of Andrew Turóci as his wife.<sup>2489</sup>

2480 Engel, *Archontológia*, vol. II, 179.

2481 *Sopron vármegye története*, vol. II, 389–91.

2482 Engel, *Archontológia*, vol. I, 341.

2483 For the references see above the chapter on the Kasztellánfi.

2484 MNL OL, DL 46 357.

2485 MNL OL, DL 46 227.

2486 In 1496 John Vitéz, bishop of Veszprém, takes into pledge some Ostfi lands in the county of Sopron: MNL OL, DL 86 421.

2487 MNL OL, DL 86 148 (1485): “fidelem parvulum nostrum” (sc. Beatricis regine); *Sopron vármegye története*, vol. II, 593 (alispán); 601 (appointment as ispán).

2488 MNL OL, DL 68 541.

2489 See above the chapter on the Turóci.

### 3. SOCIAL ANALYSIS

Having thus retraced the history of the families which, along the criteria elaborated in the first part of the book, can be regarded as belonging to the (still vaguely defined) noble élite of the county of Körös, in the next phase it is necessary to examine these families as a group from a number of approaches which may helpfully prepare the ground for some general conclusions to be proposed; these, then, would constitute the basis for comparisons with similar analyses concerning other regions of the medieval Kingdom of Hungary. On the other hand, these investigations are intended to further refine our view of the internal stratification of the county élite in general, so that in the end it would be possible to return to the problem again and offer some clues which may prove useful for anyone engaged in a similar work. As mentioned above, I have partly involved in this analysis some of the families and persons who have not been treated in independent sub-chapters for lack of sufficient information, but in case of whom the little we know can still help to make the picture as broad and detailed as possible.<sup>1</sup>

#### 3.1. ORIGINS

For the sake of convenience, I have condensed the most important information in the following table. The list follows the chronological order of settlement (or appearance) in Körös, with the exception of the last group which contains those families which may have been indigenous in Slavonia (or at least there is no evidence for supposing the contrary), and those which belonged originally to the conditional (that is, non full-right) nobility of Körös.

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<sup>1</sup> See above the chapter 2.1. It is, particularly, with regard to the origins that these examples offer a wider basis for the investigation; for it is clear that even if these families and persons remained attached to other parts of the kingdom, or disappeared fairly quickly from Slavonia, the means and ways of their getting there are nevertheless highly indicative.

### 3. SOCIAL ANALYSIS

NAME	KINDRED	TIME OF SETTLEMENT (APPEARANCE) IN SLAVONIA	MEANS OF (ORIGINAL) LAND ACQUISITION
Vojkfi/Garázda	Vojk	eleventh century	royal donation
Gorbonoki		twelfth century	royal donation?
Kerhen of Belosovc		twelfth century	royal donation?
Budor of Budrovc		twelfth century	royal donation?
Csupor of Monoszló	Monoszló	twelfth century	royal donation
Szencsei	Tibold	twelfth century	royal donation
Fáncs of Gordova		thirteenth century	indigenous? + royal donation
Rohfi of Déce		thirteenth century	purchase
Pekri	Tétény	thirteenth century	royal donation
Grebeni	Gárdony	thirteenth century	purchase
Bocskai	Gutkeled	thirteenth century	royal donation
Herbortyai/Ostfi	Osli	thirteenth century	royal donation
Rumi		thirteenth century <sup>1</sup>	?
Szentgróti	Türje	thirteenth century	royal donation
Paksi	Rátót	thirteenth century	royal donation <sup>2</sup>
Terbenyei		thirteenth century	?
Bakolcai		fourteenth century	?
Bakonyai	Hermán	fourteenth century	?
Gereci		fourteenth century	royal donation?
Musinaí	Péc	fourteenth century	?
Kasztellánfi		fourteenth century	marriage
Kapitánfi of Desnice		fourteenth century	?
Nelepec	[Hrvatinić]	fourteenth century	royal donation
Ludbregi		fourteenth century	royal donation
Latkfi	[Hrvatinić]	fourteenth century	royal donation
Kustyer		fourteenth century	royal donation
Dersfi	Győr	fourteenth century	royal donation
Rohonci	Héder	fifteenth century	pledge
B. Tulbert		fifteenth century	royal donation
Dombai	Győr	fifteenth century	royal donation
Simon Nagy		fifteenth century	purchase, <i>familiaritas</i> (Hunyadi)
Tamasovci	Gatal	fifteenth century	royal donation
Paschingar		fifteenth century	marriage, <i>familiaritas</i> (Cilli)
Piers		fifteenth century	marriage, <i>familiaritas</i> (Cilli)

### 3.1. ORIGINS

NAME	KINDRED	TIME OF SETTLEMENT (APPEARANCE) IN SLAVONIA	MEANS OF (ORIGINAL) LAND ACQUISITION
Ladislás Zalai		fifteenth century	<i>familiaritas</i> (Cilli)
Nicholas Vizaknai		fifteenth century	adoption ( <i>familiaritas</i> , Hunyadi)
Fodorovci		fifteenth century	donation, <i>familiaritas</i> (bishop of Zagreb)
Kristallóci (2), K. Török		fifteenth century	royal donation
Frodnacher		fifteenth century	donation, <i>familiaritas</i> (Cilli)
Pozsegai		fifteenth century	marriage, <i>familiaritas</i> (Ernusz)
Lónyai		fifteenth century	marriage, <i>familiaritas</i> (Hunyadi)
Turóci		fifteenth century	donation, marriage, <i>familiaritas</i> (Cilli)
Lusiczky		fifteenth century	royal donation
Székely of Kövend		fifteenth century	royal donation
Stephen Doroszlai		fifteenth century	purchase
Geszti		fifteenth century	?
Batthyány (Kővágóörsi)		fifteenth century	royal donation, marriage
Pogány		fifteenth century	marriage
Kecer	Aba	fifteenth century	marriage, <i>familiaritas</i> (bishop of Zagreb)
Kerecsényi	Gyovad	fifteenth century	marriage, <i>familiaritas</i> (bishop of Zagreb)

G. Pető	Nádasd	fifteenth century	marriage, <i>familiaritas</i> (Corvin)
Butkai	Gutkeled	fifteenth century	marriage
George Diakói		fifteenth century	marriage?
Móré of Dada		fifteenth/sixteenth century	marriage
Ósi		fifteenth century	pledge
Gregory Horváth		fifteenth century	pledge
Szerecsen		fifteenth century	marriage?
Predrihoi		fifteenth century	donation, <i>familiaritas</i> (Corvin)
Bosnyák		fifteenth century	marriage?
Alapi		fifteenth century	donation, <i>familiaritas</i> (Corvin)
Gyulai	Győr	fifteenth century	purchase, <i>familiaritas</i> (Corvin)
Sabatinus		fifteenth century	royal donation
Pan of Kravarina		fifteenth century	marriage, <i>familiaritas</i> (Ernusz)

### 3. SOCIAL ANALYSIS

Tahi		fifteenth century	marriage
Hásságyi		fifteenth century	marriage
Čavlović		?	?
Dacsó of Őr, Pečiban of Čomorag, Horváth of Szeglak		sixteenth century	marriage
Sztrazsemlyei		sixteenth century	marriage?
Bikszádi		thirteenth century	? (royal donation?)
Kristallóci (1)		thirteenth century	? (castle warrior?)
Kamarcai		thirteenth century	?
Jakószerdahelyi		thirteenth century	?
Mindszenti		thirteenth century	?
Berivojszentiváni		thirteenth century	castle warrior
Stefekfi of Temenica		thirteenth century	castle warrior
C. Mikcsec		thirteenth century	castle warrior
Raveni		thirteenth century	castle warrior
Borotva		thirteenth century	castle warrior
Horzovai		thirteenth century	<i>nobilis castri?</i>
Prasovci		thirteenth century	<i>nobilis castri?</i>
Pataki		thirteenth century	<i>nobilis castri</i>
Gudovci		thirteenth century	<i>predialis</i>
Kopinci		thirteenth century	?
Pálfi of Szentmihály		fourteenth (thirteenth?) century	?
Orrosovci		?	?
Ervencei		fourteenth century	?
Megyericsei		fourteenth century	?
Hobetić		fifteenth century	?

- 1 Both persons called Doroszló, whose name their possession in the county of Körös bore, lived in the thirteenth century. See Engel, *Középkori Magyar Genealógia*, Tengerdi rokonság 1. tábla: Rumi.
- 2 In case the estate of Bradna did originally belong to the castle of Kemlék. We do not know how and when they acquired the estate of Sukanc where the *castellum* of Szentlászló is supposed to have stood.

The inquiry into the origins of the some 60 families which have been selected upon the basis of the criteria set out in the introduction, complemented by those which have not been subjected to particular investigation although their history at some point locked into that of the county of Körös, is hindered by a number of obstacles. These obstacles become ever more evident as we



descend the social scale. There are no problems with the families whose descent can be established from one of the *genera* of early medieval (that is, of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries) Hungarian society.<sup>2</sup> None of these was indigenous in Slavonia, and at the time of their settlement there, in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, no person other than the king was in a position to grant such huge parcels of land as they are revealed as possessing there when they become visible in our sources. The same refers to ban Belus (Beloš), of Serbian origin, who must have received his lands in Hungary from the king. These were obviously much more widespread than those we find later in the possession of the Gorbonoki, Kerhen and other related families, but we have no information whatsoever upon their original extension. The only kindred among those who arrived to Slavonia in the thirteenth century, and apparently did not come into possession of their lands there by way of royal donation, is the Gárdony, who purchased the estate of which they were named later. So did among those who came early the Rohfi of Décse, whereas the Fácns of Gordova, who are not known to have belonged to any of the kindreds, received at least part of their Slavonian possessions from king Béla IV. Interestingly, it is the apparently less important Vojk kindred whose acquisition of their Slavonian lands can be retraced farthest back in time, even if we do not take seriously the allusion to Saint Stephen. It is nevertheless conspicuous that they referred to royal donation as the source of their landed wealth; this can certainly be taken as an indication with regard to the origins of the other great estates in the region.

Originally these kindreds, and especially the Monoszló, the Tibold and the Tétény, shared most of the land in the county of Körös which did not remain in royal or ecclesiastical property. In a wide arch stretching from the Monoszló near the river Sava to the possession of the same name along the Drava, such future estates belonged to them as those of Szencse, Fejérkő and Szaplonca (Tibold), Vasmegyericse, Garignica, Dobrakucsa and Aszúágy (Tétény), and Atyina and Darnóc (Monoszló). In the northern regions of the county their domination was less complete, yet the Gutkeled and Oslí kindreds, as well as the descendants of ban Belus still counted among the major landholders in the thirteenth century.<sup>3</sup> And, despite the heavy losses suffered in the course of the centuries, these kindreds proved especially

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2 The term "early medieval" necessarily has different connotations in a kingdom established around the very end of the first millennium than it does in the western part of Europe, where most of the polities could look back on a history of their own already several centuries old at the time when the Hungarian tribes arrived to the Carpathian basin.

3 All this of course, has important implications from the point of view of the original settlement of Slavonia, which cannot be treated here in detail. Let it suffice to remark that if we discount the lands which the incoming kindreds are recorded to have possessed there in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, and also those incorporated into the domain pertaining to the major Slavonian churches, there remains very little room for others outside the tiny castle ispánates, more numerous, it is true, than elsewhere in medieval Hungary.

persistent: with two exceptions, the Csák (Raholca) and one branch of the Péc (Ludbreg), which disappeared in the course of the fourteenth century, and thus do not concern us here,<sup>4</sup> all the families originating from these kindreds flourished right until the end of the fifteenth century, and three of them, the Bocskai (Gutkeled), the Pekri (Tétény) and the Szencsei (Tibold) even survived Mohács. So did among the other early settlers the Fáncs of Gordova, and partly at least the Gárdony (even if then they no more belonged to the top layer of the local nobility), whereas the Rohfi only disappeared at the very end of the fifteenth century. The Garázda (Vojk) can also be counted among these long-lived kindreds, although the centre of their activity had definitively shifted to Hungary proper by the early fifteenth century.

After the first two, highly agitated decades of the fourteenth century royal power became as overwhelming as it had been half a century before.<sup>5</sup> No wonder, then, that it continued to play a dominant role in the emergence of new landowners in the county of Körös throughout the fourteenth century. The situation is quite clear in the case of the Nelepec and Latkfi families, from the Bosnian Hrvatinić kindred, who were transferred to Slavonia by king Louis I. The Ludbregi (that is, the descendants of ban John Csúz), Kustyer and Dersfi families could also thank their settlement in Körös to the royal grace: whereas the first received the lands of a family belonging to the Péc kindred, which disappeared in 1357,<sup>6</sup> the latter two were donated former royal lands. An equally unambiguous case is that of the Kasztellánfi, who, however, established themselves in Slavonia through marriage, and settled on some of the lands of the Tétény kindred. Yet the arrival of their ancestor, first attested in 1320,<sup>7</sup> should be put to the period preceding the final restoration of royal authority in Slavonia.

Problems are more numerous with regard to other families which appeared in Slavonia in the course of the fourteenth century. We have seen above that the circumstances of the settlement of the Bakolcai family (and of the Bakonyai, for that matter) in Körös are totally obscure. Similarly, we know nothing about the way in which the Gereci and Musinai families acquired their possessions there. Since both the Péc kindred and palatine Mojs, from whom the Gereci family descended, did have possessions in Körös in the thirteenth century, it is possible that their settlement at Musina and Gerec respectively had been continuous since then. It should be remarked, however, that the castle called Musina beyond the Drava, which can safely be identified as the later Musina, was before 1273 precisely in the hands of palatine Mojs.<sup>8</sup>

4 On the Slavonian branch of the Csák kindred see Karácsonyi, *Magyar nemzetségek*, 358–64. On the Péc see *ibid.*, 886–95 (esp. 893, but note that ban John Csúz was not the son of Nicholas Ludbregi), and Engel, *Archontológia*, vol. II, 150 with the further references cited there.

5 Engel, *Realm of Saint Stephen*, 140–51.

6 Engel, *Archontológia*, vol. I, 363.

7 Maček–Jurković, *Rodoslov plemića*, 53.

8 Karácsonyi, *Magyar nemzetségek*, 448.

It is thus purely because of their absence from the sources in the course of the thirteenth century that I locate their definitive settlement in Körös to the fourteenth century.

The establishment of the Dersfi family in Slavonia at the very end of the fourteenth century leads us to the last phase of royal authority as a dominant factor in horizontal noble mobility. The estate of Tapalóc, which was given to Márton Ders then, had been confiscated from the Ördög family for infidelity. In the first years of the fifteenth century, the last serious upheaval before the consolidation of king Sigismund's reign, three other families established themselves in Körös. Two of them, the Szász and the Dombai, equally received land forfeited for infidelity, whereas George Kővágóörsi, the ancestor of the Batthyány family, was granted royal property. It is worth remarking that George, who was a *familiaris* of archbishop John Kanizsai, almost lost his newly acquired estate after the temporary fall of his lord in 1403.

After his definitive victory over the baronial opposition in 1403, king Sigismund became increasingly parsimonious, and this fact was reflected not only in his policy towards the aristocracy.<sup>9</sup> During the remaining thirty-four years of his reign only two non-baronial families received considerable lands in the county of Körös. Nicholas Gereci together with Joseph the Turk, as well as the Italian counts of Prata, later known as the Tulbert family, were given estates which had previously escheated to the crown. The only other family which arrived to the county of Körös before the death of Sigismund, namely the Rohonci of the Héder kindred, acquired the estate of Ludbreg there by pledge. The remaining elements of the ban's *honor* (the two Kemlék, Kővár, Garics and Velike) were allotted by Sigismund at first to his wife, queen Barbara, and later to his chief baronial supporters, which meant that there remained nothing available for royal donation in the county of Körös with the exception of the lands which were to escheat to the crown later.<sup>10</sup>

It is no wonder, then, that among the several families which arrived to the county of Körös during the second half of the fifteenth century, only three are known to have received their lands by way of royal patronage. Two cases concern the same estate of Dobrakucsá, confiscated from the Ernuszt family, which was granted by king Matthias successively to Nicholas Lusicky and James Székely, and the latter (or, more precisely, his brother and his descendants) got hold of it definitively. The estate of Garignica, available for royal donation after the heirless death of Nicholas Pozsegai, was given by the same king to the Italian Sabatinus, the husband of the nurse of queen Beatrix, who, however, only possessed it for some years.

All the others acquired their Slavonian lands by means other than a royal grant. In these cases two factors seem to have played a dominant role: *familiaritas* and marriage. One could even say that in the latter part of the

<sup>9</sup> Engel, *Királyi hatalom, passim*.

<sup>10</sup> Engel, *Archontológia*, vol. I, 16, on the fate of the banal *honor*.

fifteenth century the routine way of getting land in Körös was to join the service of a local magnate or prelate and then marry a woman from a well-to-do local noble family. This is what happened in the case of the Paschingar, Pozsegai, Lónyai, Kecser, Kerecsényi, Pető, Predrihoi, Bosnyák, Čavlović, Pan of Kravarina and Tahi families, and the examples could be multiplied.<sup>11</sup> As for the Pogány, Hássági and Szerecsen families, they seem to have arrived to Körös thanks to marriage alone, which, in view of their long settlement in two neighbouring counties, is not surprising at all. Others, such as Simon Nagy in the middle of the fifteenth century and John Gyulai at its end, apparently also came to Slavonia as *familiares*, but bought their lands there for cash. Somewhat similar is the case of the Rohonci: scion of the notorious Kőszegi family, sentenced for infidelity in 1403, Andrew Rohonci arrived to Slavonia as a man of count Hermann of Cilli, and later managed to take into pledge the important estate of Ludbreg and its castle.<sup>12</sup> Three cases apart are those of Ladislás Zalai, Wolfgang Frodnacher and Balthasar Alapi; the first two arrived in the service of count Ulrich of Cilli, the third in that of duke Corvin, and all three received their lands in Körös directly from the lord they served. Another way can be observed in the case of Benedict Turóci, who first received an estate from his lord, Ulrich of Cilli, in the county of Varasd, and later moved to Körös by way of marriage. A fairly rare case in the fifteenth century is that of the Geszti, as the circumstances among which they became implanted in Körös are simply unknown.<sup>13</sup> Again a somewhat special case is that of the Fodorovci, who came as episcopal *prediales*, and later acquired property in the county of Varasd thanks to their lords, the counts of Cilli.

The last group of families leads us back to the “prehistory” of Slavonia and thus raises questions which can only partly be answered. Roughly half of the families listed there can safely be connected to the castle ispánates (*várispánságok*) which can be shown to have existed in the county of Körös in the course of the thirteenth century. Yet the emergence of these castle ispánates itself is very much open to debate, together with the origins of the families which were eventually subordinated to them.<sup>14</sup> It is thus only with reference to their appearance in the sources that I date their origins to the thirteenth century, although it is by no means impossible that they (or most of them) were indigenous in Slavonia. In one important respect, however, these families

11 Thus, for instance, it is quite clear that for Leonard Dacsó of Ór it was the service of the Geréb family which paved the way to Slavonia.

12 On him see Engel, *Királyi hatalom*, 44–45.

13 In view of the fact, however, that they were based in the neighbouring counties of Baranya and Bodrog, their move to Slavonia cannot be regarded as exceptional. Since in 1492 Bathasar Batthyány was called by Francis Geszti his *patruelis* brother (Csánki, *Körösmegye*, 34), marriage is the most probable link between them as well.

14 On the várispánságok in the county of Körös see Gyula Kristó, *A vármegyék kialakulása Magyarországon* [The Formation of Counties in Hungary] (Budapest: Magvető, 1988), 311–18. On conditional landholding in Slavonia in general see Rady, *Nobility, Land and Service*, 80–82.

clearly fall into a category that can be neatly distinguished from those who can be attached to the early medieval *genera* or otherwise can be shown to have been “full” nobles at the time of their appearance in Slavonia: their original landed wealth was evidently of a much more limited size, which, inversely, is a further proof of their more humble, “conditional” origins. The memory of these origins survived with surprising tenacity, as we have seen it upon the example of those families which had originally belonged to the castle of Körös; in the case of Kemlék the survival of an entire “castle nobility” until the end of the middle ages has always been well known, but, as the case of the Temenicei family shows, the common origins and rights of the families which had once belonged to the castle of Garics also lived on until the end of the fifteenth century despite the early dissolution of the castle organisation itself.<sup>15</sup>

In two cases, those of the Kristallóci (1) and the Bikszádi, we do know when the estate of which they were later named was acquired, but we have no information whatsoever as to where these families came from. Both of them can be demonstrated to have been active in Slavonia prior to the acquisition of their namegiving possession, which, however, does not in itself prove that they were indigenous there. The same is true of the Megyericsei family, which, as we have seen above, obtained the estate of Megyericse in the second half of the fourteenth century, but no source refers to them as living in the county of Körös before, which forces us to leave the question of their eventual origins unanswered. And, finally, the original wealth and early ramification of the Kamarcai family, and, if our hypothesis is tenable, of the related Jakószerdahelyi family, seem to mark them out as the only kin whose Slavonian origins are probable, without apparently belonging to any of the local castle ispánates.

In order to have a view of the changes more precisely within the period between 1400 and 1526, and now with regard to only those families which have been analysed individually, it would be necessary to determine which among the families examined belonged to the top layer of the nobility of the county already at the starting point of the analysis. The end of the upheaval which characterised the first phase of king Sigismund’s reign, that is, 1403 seems a convenient standpoint. But the task is not an easy one for, as we have seen above, we have no sources for measuring noble landed wealth before the end of the fifteenth century, and the use of the *egregius* title begins only in the 1420s. Nevertheless, we can calculate the size of the estates with the help of later figures, and use the *magister* title which, during the fourteenth century, played the same role as *egregius* later.<sup>16</sup> If we add to these the information on officeholding and court career, and also consider the history of the individual families prior to 1403, we have at least a vague idea of who can be regarded as

15 Kristó, *Vármegyék*, 315.

16 Engel, *Ung megye*, 97.

belonging to the upper stratum of the nobility in the county of Körös then.<sup>17</sup> Of course, there is no doubt about families such as the Fácns of Gordova: the baronial post of Ladislas (1402–04), the flow of royal donations, and the size of their landed wealth, which seems to have been roughly the same by 1408 as in 1495, leave one with no doubt as to their local status. In other cases, however, it is merely the supposed size of the landed wealth, occasionally coupled with the *magister* title, which argues for regarding a given family as member of a supposedly outstanding group within the nobility. All this is very much open to doubt; it is thus highly questionable whether, around 1400, the Fácns can be regarded as belonging to the same group within the nobility as the Cirkvenai. But this is a problem at any given time in the pre-1526 history of the Hungarian nobility, and we will have to return to it later. All in all, altogether 32 families, that is, roughly half of the units chosen along the criteria set out in the introduction can be regarded as belonging to a layer that can be fairly clearly distinguished from the great mass of the petty nobility in the county of Körös at that time.<sup>18</sup> If we prepare the same list in 1526, we find 29 families, 16 among which can be found on the list of 1403 as well.<sup>19</sup> 10 out of the 32 listed in 1403 died out altogether,<sup>20</sup> whereas four had become so insignificant, because of the loss of their lands or for some other reasons, that they can by no means treated any more as belonging to the “leading” nobility, however wide it is perceived.<sup>21</sup>

This in itself suggests that considerable changes took place within the ranks of the top layer of the nobility between 1403 and 1526. Yet we also have to take into consideration those families and persons which entered that layer after 1403, but disappeared biologically or socially, or otherwise simply left Slavonia before 1526. We find altogether 17 such families,<sup>22</sup> 9 of which arrived from outside the county of Körös, the rest rising from the lower sections of the nobility; this number in itself hints at an intensive horizontal mobility in the course of the fifteenth century. In any case, the picture is in sharp contrast

17 Here, and in the following pages, I try to avoid, as far as possible, the use of the term “élite”, for I will return to the problem of the extent to which the groups of nobility defined here can be regarded as an élite in chapter 3.7 below.

18 Bikszádi, Borotva, Kustyer, Grebeni, Bocskai, Ostfi, Gorbonoki, Dombai, Dersfi, Kamarcai, Jakószerdahelyi, Ervencei, Megyericsei, Musinai, Fácns, Berivojszentiváni, Csupor, Rohfi, Latkfi, Kapitánfi, Pekri, Szencsei, Kasztellánfi, Nelepec, Kristallóci 1, Bakolcai, Cirkvenai, Raveni, Gereci, Tamasovci, Garázda, Stefekfi.

19 Kerhen, Szencsei, Fácns, Pekri, Batthyány/Grebeni, Bocskai, Bakolcai, Gereci, Musinai, Kasztellánfi, Kapitánfi, Nelepec, Dersfi, Kamarcai, Dombai, Frodnacher, Turóci, Pogány, Hásságyi, Kecser, Kerecsényi, Alapi, Tahi, Čavlović, Prasovci, Hobetić, Raveni, Garázda, Budor.

20 Bikszádi, Kustyer, Ostfi, Gorbonoki, Jakószerdahelyi, Csupor, Rohfi, Latkfi, Kristallóci 1, Cirkvenai.

21 Borotva, Ervencei, Berivojszentiváni, Tamasovci.

22 Rohonci, Tulbert, Paschingar, Piers, Kristallóci 2, Pozsegai, Lónyai, Bosnyák, Gudovci, Horzovai (Tompá), Pataki, Kopinci, Fodorovci, Mindszenti, Pan of Kravarina, Orros, Pálfi.



with what Pál Engel found in the distant county of Ung, where “at the end of the reign of king Sigismund roughly 80 to 85% of the estates were possessed by the descendants of those who had owned them in the time of Charles I.”<sup>23</sup> It is true, though, that Engel counted the entire nobility of the county, and in a different period which only partially overlaps with the one studied here.

We have seen above that the great majority of the new members of the noble élite in the county of Körös arrived from other regions of Hungary, or, in three cases, from Croatia and Bosnia, through various ways, but generally by way of *familiaritas* and marriage. Most of them belonged to the leading nobility already in their counties of origin, and, apart from the *familiares* of the counts of Cilli, about whom we know very little, Nicholas Pozsegai and Peter Pan of Kravarina seem to have been exceptional in that they could thank their rise entirely to their lord, John Ernuszt, thus combining territorial with social mobility.<sup>24</sup>

Much more restricted were the ways which led from the local petty nobility to the higher ranks of noble society. Altogether eight cases can be treated as instances of social rise, temporary or definitive. Although it is of course impossible to detect with absolute certainty the underlying causes of such rise, some elements may nevertheless be suspected. Two of them, literacy and service, seem to have played a dominant role. It is conspicuous that the rise of at least five among the families concerned, that is, the Horzovai (Tompá), Kopinci, Pataki, Fodorovci and Gudovci, can somehow be linked to the patronage of the counts of Cilli or of John Vitovec. Peter Gudovci, notary of the counts, and Albert Pataki, prothonotary of the seat of Körös, surely served Vitovec with their pen, whereas Anthony Kopinci, also pardoned among the *familiares* of Vitovec in 1463, seems to have been a man of legal knowledge, as his participation in arbitrations shows. As for John Mindszenti, he apparently could thank his career to his lord, and perhaps even kinsman, John, bishop of Pécs. What is clear is that such service could at least sometimes be profitable, as the acquisitions of both Anthony Kopinci and the Mindszenti

<sup>23</sup> Engel, *Ung megye*, 85.

<sup>24</sup> Defining the social position of a given individual at the time of his arrival to Slavonia is not always a straightforward task, however, and sometimes strictly impossible. This is particularly the case with those persons, such as Elias Bosnyák and Paul Čavlović, whose place of origin cannot be established. This difficulty is not limited to newcomers from Croatia and Bosnia, moreover. Yet in the majority of cases an inquiry along the lines adopted for the definition of the target group of this book (title, landed wealth, office-holding) makes it possible to define social position with relative certainty. There always remain dubious cases, however, for example that of the Kerecsényi. It is beyond doubt that originally the family did not belong to the first ranks of the nobility in the county of Zala, judging from their great numbers and the restricted amount of their landed wealth. Yet in 1510 George Kerecsényi was having portions in nineteen villages in the same county (MNL OL, DF 280 208), in the possession of which he can evidently be counted among the richest non baronial landowners there. It is, however, impossible to tell how much of this wealth had been accumulated by the time of his joining the bishop of Zagreb, and what was acquired thereafter.

show. The career of Nicholas Gereci is evidently a case apart, for it was based on the expertise he had gained during his long Ottoman captivity. And, at the very end of the period, the rise of the Prasovci family was again launched by literacy.

It has to be remarked, however, that, with three exceptions, such rise proved to be ephemeral, and did not last for more than two generations. The Kristallóci (2) and the Mindszenti sank into obscurity after they had lost Kristallóc and Dobrakucsa respectively. In the case of the Pataki the momentum seemed great enough to endure for two generations, especially if the George Pataki who held some border castles was indeed member of the same family, but ceased soon after the death of Albert, evidently because he was unable to acquire enough land. The situation is the same with the Horzovai, for even Michael Tompa proved unable to transmit his social prestige to his kinsmen. As for the Fodorovci, the son and grandsons of Gregory continued to live the unremarkable life of the petty nobility, again because of the lack of sufficient landed wealth. It is worth remarking that both the Kristallóci (2) and the Mindszenti began to lose prestige after they had lost their fortifications, whereas the Horzovai and the Fodorovci were unable to get or build one.

Nor were the Kopinci, yet their social position was not undermined completely after the death of Anthony. It is true that Ladislás did not inherit the authority of his father, but both he and his son John remained at least occasionally titled *egregius*, and their service of duke Lawrence Újlaki is significant. Yet the real exceptions are the cases of the Gudovci, Prasovci and Hobetić families. All of them started from the ranks of the conditional nobility, although in the case of the Prasovci it may already have gone into oblivion by the late fifteenth century. Both Peter Gudovci and Stephen Prasovci began their careers as notaries, the first in the chancery of count Ulrich of Cilli, the second in that of the king. Balthasar Hobetić, on the other hand, was from the start in the service of the bishop of Zagreb. There is one common element in their careers which seems to account for their enrichment: all three governed the estates of the bishopric of Zagreb for several years. The see of Zagreb was one of the richest among the Hungarian bishoprics,<sup>25</sup> and since the major acquisitions of Peter Gudovci and Stephen Prasovci, and, as it seems, also those of Balthasar, can be dated to their service as secular administrators, it is evident that it was the revenues accruing from their office which enabled them to accumulate land on a scale that secured a place for their offspring within the top ranks of the nobility in the county. The Gudovci family died

25 True, in 1525 it was only seventh among the Hungarian sees with an annual income of 18,000 florins, but this sum still stood closer to the revenues of the richer dioceses than to those of the ones which lagged behind. Moreover, it should not be forgotten that by 1525 the lands of Zagreb had been greatly impoverished by the constant Ottoman incursions. See Erik Fügedi, "A XV. századi magyar püspökök" [The Hungarian Bishops in the Fifteenth Century], in idem, *Kolduló barátok, polgárok, nemesek. Tanulmányok a magyar középkorról* [Mendicant Friars, Burghers, Nobles. Studies on Medieval Hungary] (Budapest: Magvető, 1981), 111.

out in the second generation, and the career of Balthasar Hobetić leads us beyond Mohács, it is true, but the fact that the daughter of Stephen Gudovci married John Pekri, and that Balthasar could marry from a constantly *egregius* family from the county of Zagreb, shows that their prestige was already well established and in the case of the Gudovci it would certainly have survived Mohács in case Stephen had had a son. As for the Prasovci (Prassóczy in Hungarian), they remained influential members of the Slavonian nobility right into the seventeenth century.

That literacy itself and entry to the royal court were not necessarily enough as a springboard for ambitious petty noblemen is illustrated by the dozens of Slavonian notaries attested as functioning in the royal chancelleries and the central courts during the whole period examined in the present book, none of whom was able to lay the foundations for any social rise deserving this name.<sup>26</sup> Nor was the office of deputy prothonotary of Slavonia, although providing considerable prestige locally, in itself sufficient to launch such a rise, as is proved by the examples of Clement Paulovci<sup>27</sup> or Peter Vratissa,<sup>28</sup> who remained much more obscure socially than either Peter Gudovci or Balthasar Hobetić or indeed master Nicholas Vojkfi, albeit the office of deputy prothonotary evidently involved some revenues. In itself, however, it was apparently not enough to serve as a starting point for an ascent into the higher spheres of noble society. The only apparent exception to the rule is indeed Nicholas Vojkfi, who is not known to have held other office alongside that of the Slavonian (deputy) prothonotary, yet he was evidently on the way to establish his place within the *egregius* nobility when his untimely death occurred. Apparently, thus, his case should also be regarded as that of a successful social climber; and, since he never served the bishop of Zagreb, his example would prove that a simple notary could equally make his way into the top ranks of the nobility. Yet, if our reconstruction is correct, master Nicholas can by no means be regarded as a newcomer, even if he belonged to the least prestigious group of his kindred.

The noble élite of the county of Körös in terms of its origins thus offers an interesting parallel with the English example, which will be exploited more thoroughly in the last section of this book. As Simon Payling has observed, with reference to roughly the same period, the “families identifiable as the élite of Lancastrian Nottinghamshire can be divided into three principal categories. The first and largest reflects society at its most static and is composed of what might be termed the county’s ancient aristocracy: families whose extensive local estates had long ensured them a place at the forefront of the local community. The second is composed of families similarly long-

26 Bónis, *Jogtudó értelmiség*, passim.

27 MNL OL, DF 231 416, DF 233 405, DF 255 803, DF 231 575, DF 279 539, DF 231 588.

28 On Peter Vratissa and his family: Smičiklas, *Codex diplomaticus*, vol. XI, 555–57; MNL OL, DF 218 971, DF 290 158, DL 101 176, DF 232 448, DL 104 298, DF 276 901, DF 219 273, DF 219 285.

established in the county but only recently risen into the ranks of the élite. These families are generally characterised by a great leap forward in status over one or two generations: their rise was most frequently due to the highly successful career of one of their members in the law or some more direct form of royal service, a success which opened the way for a succeeding head of the family to marry profitably [...]. The third and smallest category is composed of imports into the county: families who, through marriages to wealthy Nottinghamshire heiresses, suddenly found themselves amongst the leading families of the county.”<sup>29</sup> Now it is evident that we find basically the same three groups in the county of Körös, with the important difference that the third, comprising “imports” from other counties, was apparently much greater than the second (that of “social climbers”). This difference notwithstanding, the parallel is certainly worthy of attention, and may be rooted in the similar political and administrative structures of the two countries in the late middle ages.




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<sup>29</sup> Payling, *Political Society*, 19.

## 3.2. WEALTH, TRAFFIC OF LAND AND SOCIAL MOBILITY

At first sight, it may seem very dubious whether the some sixty families which I have selected along the criteria defined in chapter 2.1 of this book really fit into the same social category. In a sense, nor is it possible to compare them one with another for a number of reasons. The first is chronological: not all the families listed were contemporaries of each other, and social and political circumstances could (and did) change a lot between 1400 and 1526. Second, even the individual families and persons could go through such profound changes that the place they occupy within local society apparently needs to be reassessed anew at different points within the period studied. Take, for instance, the example of the Gudovci family, or that of Ladislav Hermanfi, whose wealth multiplied perhaps tenfold in the course of his life (whether his local esteem grew accordingly is another matter to be analysed later on). Thirdly, inequality and the loosening of the ties of kinship within the individual families mean that it is sometimes misleading to speak about the wealth and prestige of a given family or kindred instead of speaking about those of individuals. I will return to these problems in the last chapter of the book. Nevertheless, it is necessary somehow to try to establish at least the relative wealth and status of the families concerned, for it is the basis of all further analysis and comparison.

To start with, the material wealth of the families has to be reconstructed and at least some smaller groups distinguished among them. In the absence of lists enumerating the number of tenant plots owned by the individual families, the marker which is generally used in drafting such lists, and with a view to the risks inherent in the numbers based directly upon the charter material, I decided to examine at first another feature, that of the possession of fortifications and market towns, supposing that these forms of human settlement can serve as a useful guide not only with regard to the aristocracy.<sup>30</sup> Indeed, we have a unique document which proves beyond doubt that the possession of one or more *castella* was perceived by contemporaries as an indicator of social position within the nobility. It is the agreement drafted in 1490, destined to settle the dispute which had dragged on since the early 1430s with the bishop of Zagreb around the matter of tithe-paying. In defining the number of exempt persons, the authors of the agreement, themselves Slavonian noblemen, assigned greater numbers to the same amount of tenant sessions in case a *castellum* belonged to them.<sup>31</sup> As regards market towns, this

30 Engel, *Magyar világi nagybirtok*, *passim*.

31 MNL OL, DF 252 108: "Item qui habet viginti quinque usque ad quinquaginta jobagiones cum castello habeat liberos tres, si non habet castellum habeat duos liberos. Item qui habet quinquaginta usque ad centum jobagiones sed (si) non habet castellum habeat liberos tres,

type of settlement was as a matter of fact attached to greater estates. In drafting the list, I neglected the question of how many such objects were possessed by the individual families at any given time; I included all which turn up in the sources during the period between 1400 and 1526. Nor do I consider the sometimes enormous differences within the individual families; this again raises problems which will have to be analysed in detail below. I hope that this approach, to be refined later on, is sufficiently justified by the analysis which follows.<sup>32</sup>

The list of course suffers from several shortcomings. First of all, in a number of cases, especially in the lower regions of the list, it is impossible to indicate the time of the acquisition (or construction) of either the individual fortifications or the market towns. Fortifications and market towns could also be lost in the course of time, thereby diminishing the wealth and status of a given family. Moreover, there could (and did) exist enormous differences between the fortifications and market towns themselves in terms of size, population, revenues and prestige. What is also impossible to indicate on the table is the division of wealth within the families, which sometimes resulted in huge inequalities; I will return to these later. Another difficulty stems from the problem of defining exactly what can be regarded as constituting a given family's property. For instance, I have adopted the *castellum* of Garignica among the fortifications of the Pekri family, on the assumption that Susan Pekri belonged to the family, and she not only possessed the fortification but also introduced her kinsmen of the other branch at least into portions of the estate of Garignica itself. Yet nothing proves beyond doubt that the latter had access to the *castellum*, even in periods when it was not possessed by the subsequent husbands of Susan. Moreover, considerable differences were caused by the number of individuals sharing one given object at a given time; to give but one example, the value represented by a single market town held by five close kinsmen simultaneously was not equal to that of one owned by a single individual alone. The table, although thus unfit for reflecting more than the main trends, is nevertheless highly indicative in several regards.

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cum castello habeat liberos quatuor. Item qui habet centum usque ad trecentos jobagiones cum castello habeat liberos octo, sine castello habeat liberos quinque."

32 The families follow each other in three major groups: first come those with castles, followed by those who only had one or more *castella*. In the end are treated those who did not possess any one of these fortifications. Within the first group the alphabetical order has been retained, whereas in the second I tried to order the families in a hierarchy from top to bottom. I only give references when these are missing from the biographical chapters, with the exception of the market towns, for which I indicate the charters where they are mentioned.



## 3.2. WEALTH, TRAFFIC OF LAND AND SOCIAL MOBILITY

Family	<i>Castrum</i>	<i>Castellum</i>	Market town
Alapi	1 (4) <sup>1</sup>	1 <sup>2</sup>	1 <sup>3</sup>
Bocskai	1 <sup>4</sup>	4 <sup>5</sup>	2 <sup>6</sup>
Csupor	2 <sup>7</sup>	1 <sup>8</sup>	4 <sup>9</sup>
Dersfi	½ <sup>10</sup>	2 <sup>11</sup>	3 <sup>12</sup>
Gorbonoki	1 <sup>13</sup>	2 <sup>14</sup>	1 <sup>15</sup>
Grebeni/Battyányi	2 <sup>16</sup>	5 <sup>17</sup>	7 <sup>18</sup>
Kasztellánfi	(2) <sup>19</sup>	2 <sup>20</sup>	3 <sup>21</sup>
Kecer	2 <sup>22</sup>	(2) <sup>23</sup>	1 <sup>24</sup>
Lónyai	½ <sup>25</sup>	½ <sup>26</sup>	1 + 2 × 1/2 <sup>27</sup>
Nelepec	1 <sup>28</sup>	4 <sup>29</sup>	3 <sup>30</sup>
Pekri	1 <sup>31</sup>	9 <sup>32</sup>	5 <sup>33</sup>
Pogány	1 (5) <sup>34</sup>	1 <sup>35</sup>	3
Predrihoi	1 <sup>36</sup>		1 <sup>37</sup>
Rohfi	4 <sup>38</sup>	1 (2) <sup>39</sup>	4 <sup>40</sup>
Rohonci	1		1
Szencsei	2 (4) <sup>41</sup>	4 <sup>42</sup>	3 <sup>43</sup>
Tahi	2 <sup>44</sup>	3 <sup>45</sup>	4 <sup>46</sup>
Tulbert	1 <sup>47</sup>		1 <sup>48</sup>
Turóci	3 <sup>49</sup>		3 <sup>50</sup>
Fáncs	(2) <sup>51</sup>	(1) <sup>52</sup>	3 <sup>53</sup>
Ervencei		3 <sup>54</sup>	2 <sup>55</sup>
Dombai		3 <sup>56</sup>	2 <sup>57</sup>
Musina		3 <sup>58</sup>	
Gudovci		2 <sup>59</sup>	1 (2) <sup>60</sup>
Kapitánfi		1 (2) <sup>61</sup>	1 (2) <sup>62</sup>
Kerecsényi		2 <sup>63</sup>	
Pan of Kravarina		1 <sup>64</sup>	2 <sup>65</sup>
Megyericsei		1 <sup>66</sup>	1 <sup>67</sup>
Pozsegai		1 <sup>68</sup>	1 <sup>69</sup>
Berivojszentiváni		1 <sup>70</sup>	1 <sup>71</sup>
Kamarcai		1 <sup>72</sup>	1 <sup>73</sup>
Paschingar		1 <sup>74</sup>	1 <sup>75</sup>
Kristallóci 1		1 <sup>76</sup>	1 <sup>77</sup>
Kristallóci 2		1 <sup>78</sup>	1 <sup>79</sup>
Stefekfi		1 <sup>80</sup>	1 <sup>81</sup>

### 3. SOCIAL ANALYSIS

Family	<i>Castrum</i>	<i>Castellum</i>	Market town
Ost		1	
Cirkvenai		(1) <sup>82</sup>	
Kustyer		1 <sup>83</sup>	
Tamasovci (Szász)		1 <sup>84</sup>	
Bosnyák		1 <sup>85</sup>	
Hássági		1	
Latkfi		1 <sup>86</sup>	
Bakolcai		1 <sup>87</sup>	
Bikszádi		1 <sup>88</sup>	
Kerhen	1/3 <sup>89</sup>		1 <sup>90</sup>
Prasovci		1 <sup>91</sup>	
Frodnacher		1 <sup>92</sup>	
Borotva		1 <sup>93</sup>	
Budor		1	
Vojkfi		(1) <sup>94</sup>	
Pataki		1 <sup>95</sup>	
Mindszenti?	(1/2) <sup>96</sup>		
Jakószerdahelyi			1 <sup>97</sup>

- 1 *Nagykemplék* (Körös) (1502–beyond 1526). He also possessed, at least partly, three castles in Croatia, *Po(d)vozid* (*Podzwyzd*), *Vranograč* (*Wranograchya*) and *Čavić* (*Chawycza*), previously owned by the Frangepán family. MNL OL, DF 275 098, DF 232 658. These were in all probability donated to him by duke Corvin. On the castles see Milan Kruhek, *Krajiške utvrde I obrana Hrvatskog kraljevstva tijekom 16. stoljeća* [Border Castles and Defence of the Croatian Kingdom in the Sixteenth Century] (Zagreb: Institut za suvremenu povijest, 1995), 189–90.
- 2 *Vokovina* (Zagreb) (1500–beyond 1526).
- 3 *Brezovica* (Körös), belonging to the castle of Nagytemplék (MNL OL, DL 32 874). I did not count either the possessions held by right of pledge by Andrew Alapi or those of the Batthyány in which the Alapi Batthyány had a share, but not Balthasar Alapi himself.
- 4 *Apajvára* (Körös) (thirteenth century–1468 and beyond?). On its early history see Engel, *Archontológia*, vol. I, 267. According to Engel, it vanished around the middle of the fifteenth century. Yet it is still mentioned in 1468 (“castrum Apay”, MNL OL, DL 94 233), and seems to be identified with the “domus seu castrum [...] de Razyna” referred to in 1490/95 (Csánki, *Körösmegye*, 12, n. 2; I was unable to find this charter, allegedly in the archives of the Pogány family). 1463/1481: “castrum Razyna” (MNL OL, DF 276 922).
- 5 *Kéthely* (Körös) (1450). Belonging exclusively to Ladislas and his son Peter (“castelli [...] sui et ipsius Petri filii sui proprii Kedhel nuncupati,” DL 33 353) False identification with Kedhely in the county of Somogy in Koppány, *Kastélyok*, 163; *Kustyerolc* (Körös) (1492–1502), bought by Peter Bocskai; *Szentlőrinc* (Körös) (1481–1502). Szentlőrinc is identical with Gostović, originally belonging to the castle of Körös (Csánki, *Körösmegye*, 7); it was acquired by the Bocskai family before 1381 (*Hazai Okmánytár*, vol. V, 127: “Gozthovichzenthourinch”), in 1450 still mentioned without any fortification (MNL OL, DL 33 353: “Zenthlewryncz et Gozthowincz”). First mentioned in 1481 (DL 37 582: “castelli egregii Petri Bochkay de Razynakerezthwr in

- Zenthlwryncz habiti”), it was perhaps built by Peter Bocskai himself; *Raszinya* (Körös) (before 1496–beyond 1526), it stood within the town of Raszinya itself, erected by Peter Bocskai. It was certainly in existence in 1496, when Peter Bocskai recommended it into the protection of his kinsman, Sigismund (DF 262 302: “castellum [...] in proteccionem commendamus”).
- 6 *Raszinya* (Körös) (MNL OL, DF 262 037, DF 282 462, DF 276 907), once even *civitas* (DF 276 922), common property of the whole Bocskai family; *Szentlőrinc* (Körös) (DF 262 164) belonging only to Peter Bocskai.
  - 7 *Szarvaskő/Kosuchak* (Körös) (early fifteenth century–1492). According to Engel (*Archontológia*, vol. I, 422), Szarvaskő was built by ban Paul Csupor sometime before 1415. The castle of the Csupor family referred to as Kossuchak in 1422 (Anita Kiss, “A monoszlói Csupor család osztálylevele 1422-ből” [The Charter of Land Division of the Csupor Family from 1422], *Fons* 12, no 1 (2005): 97: “sub castro Kossuchak”) seems identifiable with the “castrum Cosuchak” mentioned in 1334 (Csánki, *Körösmegye*, 75). It was certainly abandoned by 1440 (HHStA, Erdődy 11078: “castrum desertum Kosuchak nuncupatum”). Since the Croatian word *košuta* means *szarvas(ünő)* in Hungarian, we have every reason to suppose that the castle known in Hungarian as Szarvaskő was in fact erected as a sort of “twin” alongside Kosuchak, probably in consequence to a division of land, in the manner of the Kasztellánfi twin fortifications of Szircs and Zselnyak. The connection between Szarvaskő and the castle called Monoszló, also built by the Monoszló kindred sometime before the end of the thirteenth century (Engel, *Archontológia*, vol. I, 368), is not clear, however. *Kisgerzence* (Minor Gresencze, 1453). Since it appears together with Szarvaskő (Erdődy 11088), it was evidently a different fortification. It must have stood on the estate of Gerzence (Gračenica). Stephen Csupor apparently made no reference to it in his will; see next note.
  - 8 *Monoszló* (Körös) (after 1463–1492). The *castellum* was certainly erected after the license received from king Matthias. It seems to have stood in the town of Monoszló itself (MNL OL, DF 282 453). The words of the testament of Stephen Csupor (*Levéltári Közlemények* 13 1935: 253–57: “tam in castro quam in castello”) apparently refer to Szarvaskő and Monoszló. In 1509 it is already referred to as a *castrum*, then in the possession of the Erdődi family (MNL OL, DF 232 269).
  - 9 *Monoszló* (Körös) (MNL OL, DF 231 261, DF 282 453). *Lovászpataka* (Veszprém) (1409–1425), it was given by king Sigismund to Stephen and Paul Csupor for announcing to him the news of the birth of his daughter, Elizabeth, and exchanged for Gerzence in 1425 (HHStA, Erdődy 10092). *Alsó and Felső Gerzence oppida* (Körös) (1425–1492). Gerzence was bequeathed by Stephen Csupor to his wife in 1492. In 1509 they were listed in the possession of Thomas Bakóc (Adamček–Kampuš, *Popisi*, 29).
  - 10 Half of the castle of *Kaposújvár* in the county of Somogy (1403–beyond 1526). Csánki, *Körösmegye*, 573–74; Engel, *Archontológia*, vol. I, 336.
  - 11 *Tapalóc* (Körös) (1398–beyond 1526). *Bat* (Somogy) (before 1444–1459, after 1478–beyond 1526). See Horváth, “Kastélyépítési engedélyek,” 18–19; Csánki, *Körösmegye*, 17; *Somogy Megye Múltjából* 3 (1972), 50 (1521).
  - 12 *Rojcsa* (MNL OL, DL 15 201, DL 32 845, DF 255 615); *Szentkereszt* (DL 21 225); *Szentbenedek* (DL 15 272, DL 15 274, DF 282 494).
  - 13 *(Bagoly)szentgyörgy* (Zala) (1500–before 1512).
  - 14 *Gorbonok* (before 1461–beyond 1526) (Csánki, *Körösmegye*, 16). In fact, the *castellum* called Gorbonok stood in the village Pridvorje (MNL OL, DF 232 605: “in castello [...] Gorbonok vocato in possessione Prydvorya”). *Racsicaszentistván* (1490s?).
  - 15 *Gorbonok* (MNL OL, DL 101 385, DF 232 594).
  - 16 *Greben* (Körös, Varasd, Zagreb) (thirteenth century–early fourteenth century, regained before 1357, lost again in 1445, reobtained after 1490, but it belongs uniquely to the Batthyány thereafter). *Németújvár* (Vas): acquisition of Francis Batthyány in 1524.
  - 17 *Mogor* (1468–beyond 1526); *Kristallóc* (1469–beyond 1426); *Újudvar* (rebuilt before 1490–beyond 1526); *Desnice* (partly, 1482–beyond 1526); *Garignica* (1492–beyond 1526).

- 18 *Kristallóc* (Körös) (MNL OL, DL 103 933, DF 255 589); *Újudvar* (Körös) (DL 45 213, DL 100 892); *Hrascina* (Zagreb) (DL 101416, DL 104441); *Magyarlak* (Körös) (Csánki, *Körösmegye*, 11), the latter two belonging to the castle of Greben; *Desnice* (Körös) (in part, DL 101 077, DL 102 199); *Garignica* (Körös) (DL 101 118, DL 45 790); *Rákos* (Vas) (DL 104 551, belonging to the castle of Németújvár.
- 19 *Szircs* (Körös) (1423–beyond 1526). It is mentioned as a *castellum* in 1423, but referred to constantly as a *castrum* from 1457 on (Engel, *Archontológia*, vol. I, 432; MNL OL, DL 103 736, DL 34 162, DF 288 099, DF 232 150); *Zselnyak* (Körös) (1499–beyond 1526), it is generally called *castrum*, exceptionally a *castellum* (DL 108 325, DL 107 141, DF 219 342, DF 232 650). Zselnyak seems to have been erected on the estate of Szircs by George Kasztellánfi, and lay quite close to the castle of Szircs itself (Djuro Szabo, *Sredovječni gradovi u Hrvatskoj I Slavoniji* [Medieval Castles in Croatia and Slavonia] (Zagreb: Matica Hrvatska, 1920), 113). See also Adamček–Kampuš, *Popisi*, 30, where Zselnyak is mentioned as the part of George, whereas Szircs as that of Nicholas Kasztellánfi; it seems to attest that the construction of another fortification was consequent to the partition of the estate.
- 20 *Szentlélek* (Körös) (after 1430–beyond 1526), once referred to as a “*castellum seu fortalitium*” (MNL OL, DF 288 099); *Bikszád* (Körös) (cca. 1480–beyond 1526), only George and John Kasztellánfi. Although occasionally called *castrum* (DF 274 918), I have counted Bikszád among the *castella*.
- 21 *Szentlélek* (Körös) (MNL OL, DL 103 759, DF 283 653, DF 283 653); *Dimicskfölde* (Körös) (DL 106 865, DF 283 653, DF 255 589, here as “*Mychkowyna*”); *Mezőkövesd* (Borsod) (DL 86 433, DL 67 488), the latter only possessed by George and John Kasztellánfi.
- 22 *Lobor* (Varasd) (1523–?) (MNL OL, DF 277 049); *Lipóc* (Sáros) (1514–?).
- 23 (*Raszinyakeresztúr*). It is, in fact, far from sure that Francis Kecer had a share in the *castellum* which stood on the estate of Raszinya. According to a charter of 1515, Louis Pekri and his wife owned the *castellum* itself, whereas Francis Kecer and his consort had a simple noble house (*curia nobilitaris*), both buildings standing in the town of Raszinya: MNL OL, DF 277 038. *Szlavina* (Körös), presumably acquired with the Hagymás lands (DL 68 040), although the *castellum* is not mentioned in 1514 (DL 60 025).
- 24 *Raszinyakeresztúr* (in part) (see the references at the Bocskai family).
- 25 Half of the castle of *Szircs* (before 1487–before 1507).
- 26 Half of the *castellum* of *Szentlélek* (see previous note).
- 27 *Szentlélek*, *Dimicskfölde*, both in part (see references at the Kasztellánfi); *Namény* (Bereg) (MNL OL, DL 71148, abstract: Tringli, *Perényi család levéltára*, no. 794).
- 28 *Dobrakucsa* (Körös) (1358–1474).
- 29 *Dobrakucsa/Kőalja* (Körös), built by Francis Nelepec in the early sixteenth century on the appurtenances of Dobrakucsa; *Kővár* (Körös), built by the Nelepec family in the early 1470s, destroyed before 1476. Csánki (*Körösmegye*, 45) is wrong in identifying this Kővár with the one later in the possession of the Szapolyai family.) *Levač* (in Bosnia, belonging to the Nelepec prior to 1451); *Businc* (Körös) (inherited by Francis Nelepec from his father-in-law, Elias Bosnyák.)
- 30 *Csütörtökhely*, *Hévíz* (Körös) (Csánki, *Körösmegye*, 45), both belonging to the castle of Dobrakucsa, and lost with it after 1474. We have seen above, however, that Francis Nelepec at least owned portions of them in the early sixteenth century; *Kravarina* (Körös), originally also an appurtenance of Dobrakucsa, later apparently separated from it.
- 30 *Oszterc* (Varasd) (1513–1518), only Louis Pekri.
- 32 *Mogor* (Körös) (?–1427); *Garignica* (in part, and only in the 1460s); we are in a more difficult situation as regards the fortification(s) which existed at Petrovina. The *castellum* called *Kalinovc* is first referred in 1523, and another fortification, also standing at Petrovina, named *Kukinovc* (*Kwkynewcz*) turns up in 1530 (“*castrum Kwkynewcz cum districtu Pethrowyna*.” Šišić, *Acta Comititalia*, vol I, 263), and also simultaneously with Kalinovc (Laszowski, *Monumenta Habsburgica*, vol. II, 470). Since, as we have seen above, in 1493 a castellan called

- Barnaby is mentioned among the Pekri *familiares*, it may be supposed that at least one of them already existed at that time. *Szentlőrinc* (Körös) (1502–until the coming of age of Wolfgang Szencsei); *Kustyerolc* (Körös) (1502–?); *Raszinya* (1502–beyond 1526) only Louis Pekri and his sons. *Gudovc*, *Oresja* (Körös), only John Pekri.
- 33 *Garignica* (Körös) (in part) (MNL OL, DL 45 790, DL 101 118, DL 107 100); *Szentpéter* (Körös). Szentpéter is first mentioned as a market town in 1529 (Laszowski, *Monumenta Habsburgica*, vol. I, 161), but it is very probable that the huge estate of Petrovina boasted at least one such settlement before 1526 as well; *Raszinya* (in part) and *Szentlőrinc* (see the references at the Pekri), only Louis Pekri. *Szentmárton* (Varasd), on the appurtenances of Oszterc, only as long as the castle itself was in the hands of the Pekri.
- 34 *Pressburg/Pozsony* (Pozsony) (1491?–?); *Hunyad* (Hunyad) (1498–1501?), both by right of pledge; *Veszprém*, *Sümeg* (Veszprém) (1522–?), also in pledge; *Kövesd* (Zemplén) (1503–?); *Szentgrót* (Zala) (1499–?); Peter Pogány was indeed introduced into the castle and the estate, but even if he held it until his death, he surely did not bequeath it to his cousins, for it was not mentioned by Sigismund Pogány in 1510.
- 35 *Herbortya* (Oslovc) (Körös) (after 1453–beyond 1526); *Rohonc* (Vas) before 1493, only Peter Pogány; *Úrmező* (Máramaros) (1495–?) (DL 106083/193 ecw).
- 36 *Oszterc* (Varasd) (1497–1513).
- 37 *Szentmárton* (Varasd) (belonging to the castle of Oszterc).
- 38 *Veszele/Dianvára* (Körös), *Nerjuk* (Körös). Determining the exact number of fortifications in the possession of the Rohfi family is one of the most intricate problems. The relevant pieces of information in chronological order are as follow: 1412: “castrum Vezelye nuncupatum” (*Alsó-szlavóniai okmánytár*, 143); 1433: Ladislás, son of John Roh “dominus castri in Wesalia” (Lukinović, *Povijesni spomenici*, vol. VI, 352); 1446: “castrum Nerywk” (MNL OL, DL 103 608); 1466: “sub castro suo Nerywk” (DL 45 213); 1476: “in possessionibus Dyanfeld, Kothenna et Kaptolovcz [...] necnon totalium porcionum possessionariarum in Podgorja ac castelli Nerywk” (DL 103 787); 1479: “ad viam publicam qua pergitur de Kuthenna versus Dyanwara” (DL 107 041); 1482: “super castro Nerywk” (DL 102 216); 1484: “castelli Nyeryrwk” (DL 102 223); 1494: “ad possessionem Decche consequenterque castellanum et waydam egregii Bernardi Roh in castro Dyanwara et predicta possessione Decche constitutos” (DL 101 155); 1495: “in castro Dyanwara” (DF 219 074); 1495: “Jobagiones egregii Mathie Rohfy de Deche in pertinenciis castri sui Dyanowcz commorantes; ecclesia sancti Ladislai in Dyanfelde fundata” (DL 104 042); 1503: “nobilis Georgius de Zowkoyna castellanus egregii Valentini Erdedi de Monozlo per eundem in castro suo Dyanwara constitutus [...] (unacum) jobagionibus eiusdem Valentini Erdedi in pertinenciis Decze prescripta ac castri Dianfelde (!) commorantibus” (DL 107 147); 1523: “castellano de Plowdyn” (DL 34192); after 1526: “Dyanwara et Ploudin arces et Cothin oppidum; Castellanfy: petit ut assecuracio sibi facta super castro Dyanwara extendatur eciam ad castellum Plowdin et oppidum Kothenna, quia asserit illa pertinere ad Dyanwara...” (Laszowski, *Monumenta Habsburgica*, vol. I, 128, 218, 231). What is clear is that three fortifications in the course of the fifteenth century are referred to as *castrum*: Veszele, Dianvára and Nerjuk. Since they never turn up simultaneously in the sources, Csánki (*Körösmegye*, 42) and Engel (*Archontológia*, vol. I, 301) thought that two of them or even all three are in fact identical. I accept the opinion of Engel, who identified Veszele with later Dianvára, for in 1412 the possession of Dianfölte is said to belong to the castle of Veszele; Dianvára, on the other hand, according to the charter of 1494, was the fortification belonging to the estate of Décse. As for Nerjuk, two charters make it evident that it stood on the estate of Podgorja: one of them was cited above, from 1476, which clearly associates Podgorja with Nerjuk; the other, a mutilated charter from 1501, which seems to prove that the *castellum* stood in Podgorja itself (MNL OL, DL 94295: although the most important part of the charter disappeared, since the remaining part of it revolves around Podgorja, it is clear that the phrase “castellum Nerwyk vocatum in eadem habitum” should

- refer to it). *Kozara* (Szana) (1473–1481), only Ladislás Roh; *Berstyánóc* (Körös) (1470s), Ladislás Roh by right of guardianship.
- 39 *Kutenya* (Körös) (1463–?) stood in the market town of the same name. It may be the same as *Plovdiv*, which after 1526 is connected to the town of Kutenya (see previous note), whereas *castellum* Kutenya turns up for the last time in 1494. In 1412 another *castellum* of the Rohfi is attested at *Szencse* (*Alsó-szlavóniai okmánytár*, 143), which, however, never turns up any more.
  - 40 *Kutenya* (Körös) (MNL OL, DL 106 880, DL 103 843, DF 232 010); *Décse* (Körös) (DL 32 833); *Tolnavár* (Tolna) (DL 44 606); *Cekno* (belonging to the castle of Berstyánóc) (DL 101 507, Adamček–Kampuš, *Popisi*, 31).
  - 41 *Fejérkő* (before 1440/44?); *Szombathely* (before 1442–beyond 1526), on the appurtenances of Szencse. It is alternatively called *castrum* and *castellum* (MNL OL, DL 74 528, Klaić: *Plemići*, 42–43; MNL OL, DL 106 834, DL 25 510), yet I counted it among the castles; John Szencsei and his son from Catherine Velikei, Francis, acquired portions of the Velikei lands in Pozsega, among them in the castles of *Velike* and *Petnyevára*. Since in 1502 Francis Szencsei, together with John Matucsina and Emeric and John Fáncs of Gordova, had castellans of his own in both castles (DL 88 870: “quoad castellanos ipsorum in pretactis castris Welyke et Pethnyewar”), they should also be listed among the Szencsei fortifications.
  - 42 *Csubin* (Zagreb); *Rakovaz* and *Novi* (Orbász); *Svinjar* (?) (before 1450, MNL OL, DF 255 734). On Szombathely, sometimes called a *castellum*, see the previous note. *Szentlőrinc* (Körös), belonging only to Wolfgang Szencsei. I did not find in the sources the *castellum* allegedly standing at Szencse itself in 1502 (Csánki, *Körösmegye*, 37).
  - 43 *Szencseszentdemeter* (Körös) (Csánki, *Körösmegye*, 37). Szentdemeter, in fact, never turns up as an *oppidum*, and was ranked as such by Csánki on account of the fairs held there. *Szombathely* (Körös) (MNL OL, DL 19 210, here as *Zobotha*); *Szentlőrinc*: only Wolfgang Szencsei (for the references see the Pekri).
  - 44 *Pekrec* (Körös) (from 1522); *Csurgó* (Somogy) from 1522 (MNL OL, DL 23 657).
  - 45 *Zvinica* (Zagreb) (1507–?) (MNL OL, DF 232 208, DF 232 383); *Gorbonok* (1512–beyond 1526). *Krassó* (Baranya) (from 1522) (DL 23 657).
  - 46 *Gorbonok* (see the references at the Gorbonoki family); *Csurgó* (Somogy) (Csánki, *Történelmi földrajz*, vol. II, 577); *Rassa* (Körös) (Adamček–Kampuš, *Popisi*, 31); *Lesnekhegy* (Körös) (MNL OL, DL 107 119), the latter three from 1522 (DL 23 657). As with the castles and *castella*, I only counted those which were certainly in the hands of prior Matthias in 1522, although the agreement also extended to those to be redeemed by John Tahi thereafter. Since the agreement included the wife and children of Tahi, it is certainly legitimate to treat these possessions, although owned by the priory, as belonging to the family patrimony of John Tahi as long as the mortgage lasted.
  - 47 *Berstyánóc* (Körös) (1439–c. 1507).
  - 48 *Cekno* (on the appurtenances of Berstyánóc, see at the Rohfi family).
  - 49 *Belec* (Varasd) (before 1456–beyond 1526); *Ludbreg* (Körös) (before 1454–beyond 1526); *Szigliget* (Zala) (before 1482), only George Turóci. In 1526 John Turóci protested in the name of his family against the alienation by the king of the castle of Dobronya (Dobra Niva, SL), in the county of Zólyom (MNL OL, DF 277 175/589–91 ecw). Although the Turóci seem never to have practically held the castle, their claim was probably rooted in the dealings of George Turóci with the Baumkircher, for it was Andreas Baumkircher to whom the castle had been left to hold by king Matthias in the 1460s.
  - 50 *Ludbreg* (Körös, belonging to the castle of the same name) (MNL OL, DF 275 003, DL 103 824); *Csorna*, *Beled* (Sopron) (Engel, “Világi nagybirtok,” 71).
  - 51 Emeric and John Fáncs acquired portions in the castles of *Velike* and *Petnyevára* (Pozsega) through their mother, Dorottya Velikei. For the references see above at the Szencsei castles.
  - 52 *Gordova* (Körös) (before 1455–beyond Mohács). I do not count the castle which stood at Gordova in the fourteenth century, and the fortification which replaced it later is never called a *castrum*. It is possible, moreover, that more than one existed on the estate.



- 53 *Gordova* (Körös) (MNL OL, DF 255 801, DL 100 865, DL 101 413) *Korpád, Mesztegnyő* (in part, Somogy) (C. Tóth, "Gordovai Fáncs család," 279; Csánki, *Körösmegye*, 579).
- 54 *Ervence* (Körös) (after 1439?–before 1526? In that year it is referred to as "locum castelli in districtu et provincia Erwencze"); *Atak* (Visnice, Zagreb) (before 1481–after 1525); *Szvibovc* (Körös) (only Ladislás and Stanislas Ervencei) (1461–1487).
- 55 *Ervence* (Körös) (MNL OL, DF 232 719); *Szobocsina* (Körös) (DL 100 723, DL 103 896, DL 103 912) (only Ladislás and Stanislas Ervencei).
- 56 *Zákány* (Somogy) (1450–?); *Kontovc* (Körös), perhaps given to David Dombai by Lawrence Újlaki; (*Gorbonok*) It is, in fact, impossible to tell whether the Dombai had a share in the *castellum* at Gorbonok, or they constructed one for themselves; the fact that before 1490 Francis Dombai pledged his *castellum* of Gorbonok (*castellum quondam Francisci de Dombo Gorbonok appellatum*, MNL OL, DF 231 834) to Peter Gudovci points in this latter direction.
- 57 *Gorbonok* (see references above at the Gorbonoki); *Zákány* (Somogy).
- 58 *Musina* (Körös) (before 1406–1440s?; before 1481–beyond 1526); *Szenterzsébet* (Somogy) (1406–1460s); *Berzenca* (Somogy) (before 1444–1460s). In the late Jagiellonian period both Szenterzsébet and Berzenca are referred to as *castrum* (DF 277 175/671–673 *ecw*, DL 101 600), but as they were not held by the Musinai then, I counted them among the *castella*.
- 59 *Gudovc* (Körös) (1482?–1520); *Oresja* (Körös).
- 60 *Gudovc* (Körös) (MNL OL, DF 274 988, DF 231 939), *Jakószerdahely* (Körös, only in part) (DL 32 845, DL 107 608).
- 61 *Desnice* (Körös) (mid-fifteenth c.?–beyond 1526); *Garignica* (only Andrew Kapitánfi, for a very brief period before 1482).
- 62 *Desnice* (MNL OL, DL 102 199, DL 102 223, DL 101 077); *Garignica*, see previous note.
- 63 *Cirkvena* (Körös) (1498–beyond 1526); *Kányafölde* (Zala) (before 1516–?).
- 64 *Temenice* (Körös) (before 1495–?).
- 65 *Temenice* (MNL OL, DL 101 339); *Kravarina* (see above).
- 66 *Megyericse* (Körös) (fourteenth c.–?).
- 66 *Megyericse* (MNL OL, DL 107 022, DL 34 240, DL 106 845).
- 68 *Garignica* (Körös) (1473–c. 1481).
- 69 *Garignica* (for the references see at the Pekri).
- 70 *Berivojszentiván/Jalsovc* (Körös) (before 1415–after 1484).
- 71 *Berivojszentiván* (MNL OL, DL 100 896, DL 102 251). Once even *civitas* (!): HHStA, Erdődy 11074 ("in civitate Zenthivan").
- 72 *Tulova* (Körös)
- 73 *Jakószerdahely* (in part, see the references at the Gudovci).
- 74 *Garignica* (1454/1455–c. 1464) (see above).
- 75 *Garignica* (see above).
- 76 *Kristallóc*.
- 77 *Kristallóc* (see above).
- 78 *Kristallóc* (1428–1470).
- 79 *Kristallóc*.
- 80 *Temenica*.
- 81 *Szentandrás* (see above)
- 82 *Cirkvena* (Körös), in case the *castellum* was indeed constructed by the Cirkvenai family.
- 83 *Kustyerolc*.
- 84 *Tamasovc* (Körös).
- 85 *Businc* (Körös).
- 86 *Mogor/Latkovina* (Körös) (1414–1475).
- 87 *Bakolca* (Körös) (?–?)
- 88 *Bikszád*.
- 89 *Berstyanóc*.
- 90 *Endrejevc/Szentendre* (Verőce) (MNL OL, DF 252 251, cf. Adamček–Kampuš, *Popisi*, 43, 70).

- 91 Csányó (Körös).  
 92 Bednya (Körös).  
 93 Tersztenice (Körös).  
 94 *Vojkkeresztúr*, if the erection of the *castellum* can indeed be attributed to Nicholas Vojkfi. I do not count the *castellum* of the Garázda of Istváandi family in the county of Somogy, for this branch of the kindred can no more be counted among the noble families of Körös.  
 95 *Vinarc* (Körös c.), see MNL OL, DF 255 900: “ad castellum fidelis nostri nobilis condam magistri Alberti de Pathak prothonotarii sedis Warasdiensis Wynarcz vocatum.”  
 96 Half of *Dobrakucsa*. Although, as we have seen above, the acquisition of half of the estate of Dobrakucsa was an important step in the temporary rise of the Mindszenti, the preceding and consequent career of the family would by no means justify their inclusion in the first group (with castles).  
 97 *Jakószerdahely*.

To begin with, the possession of one or more castles (*castrum*), although predominantly a feature of aristocratic landholding, was in the county of Körös by no means restricted to persons of baronial status. Members of the families which fall in this group were as a rule accorded the *egregius* title, and, with two exceptions, all the families in which at least one person rose to baronial status in the course of the period of this study, also belonged to this group.<sup>33</sup> It would apparently be logical to draw the conclusion that these families should in fact be treated as members of the aristocracy rather than of the rich nobility. If we take a closer look at the baronial careers of the individuals concerned, however, we see that in each case there are anomalies which make it impossible to regard them as regular. Peter Bocskai, ban of Slavonia for some months in 1476, was accordingly titled *magnificus* then, but soon returned to office as the deputy of his successor, and was called *egregius* ever after. The Turóci produced even two barons, but, as we have seen, George continued to be titled *egregius* between the two terms of his office-holding, and so did his nephews and their sons before and after Mohács. A parallel case is that of the Csupor: neither the banship of Paul Csupor, nor the offices of his brother in the queen's court involved material acquisitions which would have definitively established the family's status among the aristocracy. As for Nicholas Csupor, he personally was beyond doubt one of the favourites of king Matthias, but his kinsman Stephen inherited neither his lands nor his prestige; while in some cases earning, at least locally, the *magnificus* title, he was generally titled a mere *egregius*. Again, Peter Pogány did become *magnificus* during his brief officeholding as master of the doorkeepers, but none among his kinsmen ever received the title either before or after.

The case of the Dersfi, while similar, again features peculiarities of its own. Martin Ders, who had earned several merits in the first critical years of king Sigismund's reign as the deputy of several lords, was rewarded after the

33 Batthyány, Bocskai, Csupor, Dersfi, Pogány, Tahi, Turóci. The Fánics may not be regarded as exceptional if we count their share in the two castles in the county of Pozsega. Thus the only case apart would remain that of the Dombai.

consolidation with a baronial post at the court, and, although he dropped out from the inner circles of central government only two years later, he was counted among the barons until his death; yet his descendants were again only *egregii*, and his great-grandson returned to office as Slavonian viceban later. As regards the Batthyány, Francis was appointed as master of the cupbearers and then as ban of Slavonia at the very end of our period, and his baronial career leads us well beyond 1526, but there is no sufficient reason to treat his father, who held the office of viceban several times, although he was at least occasionally titled *magnificus*,<sup>34</sup> and his brother, the younger Balthasar, as members of the aristocracy.

There is, on the other hand, an intimate relationship between this group and the office of the Slavonian viceban. A look at the table on the following page will suffice to prove the point.

With one exception, all the families which gave more than one viceban to Slavonia, or at least one of whose members held the office several times, belonged to the group which is characterised by the possession of castles. If we add the Csupor and Predrihoi families, which also provided vicebans, the relationship becomes even more evident. These families were interconnected by marriage relationships, to be analysed later, and the office was regularly transmitted from generation to generation. The term "dynasty of Slavonian vicebans," used with reference to the Kasztellánfi family,<sup>35</sup> can thus justly be extended to almost the whole group. It should be remarked, however, that these families, with one exception, were also the greatest non-baronial landholders of the county, having roughly 200 to 600 peasant plots, and at least one, but frequently more *castella* and market towns. The possession of castles was thus intimately linked to the size of land and involved in most cases the possession of *castella* and market towns.

As always, there are exceptions to this rule, however. The Fánecs family, which, if we count its whole landed wealth in Slavonia and outside, was perhaps the greatest landowner among all the families examined in the framework of the present research, and even produced a baron from its ranks during the reign of Sigismund, apparently never boasted an entire castle of its own, and provided only one Slavonian viceban. The situation is the same with the Dombai family. The family never had a castle either in or outside Slavonia;<sup>36</sup> Nicholas nevertheless temporarily joined the group of barons in the early phase of king Matthias' reign, which surely played a role in the fact that during the 1470s he was apparently regarded as the most prestigious among the Slavonian nobility.<sup>37</sup> The case of the Tahi family is also exceptional, and

34 For the references see the relevant section of the chapter on the Grebeni/Batthyány.

35 Maček-Jurković, *Rodoslov plemića*, 23.

36 The castle at Zákány is referred to for the last time in 1325: Engel, *Archontológia*, vol. I, 464.

37 In both 1474 and 1478 he is listed at the first place among the representatives of the Slavonian nobility.

### 3. SOCIAL ANALYSIS

Families/persons holding the office of viceban more than once 1400–1526		
NAME	NUMBER OF TERMS	YEARS OF OFFICEHOLDING ALTOGETHER (rounded)
Ladislás Szencsei sen.	1	7
Ladislás Szencsei jun.	4	10
Adam Kasztellánfi	1	2
Peter Kasztellánfi	1	4
Caspar Kasztellánfi	1	2
Nicholas Kasztellánfi	2	4
Akácus Kasztellánfi	1	2
George Kasztellánfi	1	1
Herman Grebeni	1	2
Ladislás Grebeni	2	5
Balthasar Batthyány	3	5
Ladislás Roh of Décse	3	5
Bernard Roh of Décse	1	1
Peter Bocskai	5	14
Benedict Turóci	1	2
Bernard Turóci	3	6
Balthasar Alapi	3	11
Louis Pekri	3 (4)	3
Michael Kerhen	2	5
Sum	39	91

reveals some of the difficulties inherent to any similar approach: upon the death of his maternal uncle, Bartholomew Beriszló, John Tahi inherited all the castles of the priory of Vrana, which, however, he was forced to return to the king shortly thereafter. Consequently, he only possessed the estate of Gorbonok and the *castellum* there, until, some ten years later, he was able to acquire from another prior of Vrana two castles belonging to the priory by right of pledge. Nevertheless, although consequently appointed as ban of Slavonia in 1524, he was only partly recognised by the local nobility. So was, indeed, his fellow-ban, Francis Battyányi, even if after Mohács both of them definitively entered the aristocracy. On the other hand, the Tulbert family, whose fortification at Berstyanóc was without exception referred to as a castle, but whose landed wealth certainly fell short of 100 tenant plots, gave neither a viceban to Slavonia nor a baron to the royal court; yet if we have a look at their marriage relationships, and their service, which we will do in a moment, we find that they indeed belong to the same group as the Fáncs and the

Dombai. An evident case apart is that of Michael Kerhen, alone holding the office of viceban twice without having a castle or at least a *castellum*; I will later return to him.

Yet more castles did not as a matter of fact mean more authority. We have seen that for some time in the 1470s Ladislas Roh of D  cse possessed alone or jointly as many as four buildings constantly referred to as castles, that is, more than anyone else among his peers in Slavonia, and more than a good number of barons in 1490;<sup>38</sup> however, unlike, for instance, Balthasar Batthy  ny, or Stephen Csupor, he was not even occasionally accorded the *magnificus* title,<sup>39</sup> and, at least as far as we can know, he was never in the position to start a baronial career even in the limited sense analysed above. It is also highly indicative that on the only occasion when he was listed first among the Slavonian nobility in 1471 the reason seems to have been that he was viceban at that time, for he dropped back in 1474 and 1478, although his material wealth, and especially the number of castles he possessed, did not diminish. A similar example is that of the Pog  ny family: despite the number and, indeed, the importance of the castles acquired by hereditary right or that of pledge, with the brief and ephemeral exception of Peter Pog  ny, they proved unable to break out from the *egregius* group.

What is evident, then, is that the possession of a castle, although significant to a certain extent, cannot be regarded as a strict line of division within the nobility. Right below the possessors of castles comes a group of nobility which certainly falls into the same social category, owning as a rule one or more *castella*: members of these families were also regularly given the *egregius* title, and several among them also served as Slavonian vicebans.<sup>40</sup> They were also linked by multiple ties of marriage to the castle-possessing families, as we will see in another chapter below.

The possession of another kind of fortification, referred to in our sources as *castellum*, seems to have been a much more widespread phenomenon. The form and function of this type of stronghold have been debated in modern Hungarian historiography,<sup>41</sup> but its significance in terms of social prestige is

38 Engel, "Vil  gi nagybirtok," 52–53.

39 Several years after the extinction of the family, in 1513, Stephen Rohfi did indeed receive the *magnificus* title (MNL OL, DL 94 321: "Katherine [...] filie [...] magnifici quondam Stephani Roffy de Deche"); this, of course, does nothing to counter the fact that before 1495 no member of the family ever received the title.

40 Alongside the families listed in the previous paragraph, the Gudovci, Pozsegai, Gorbonoki, Ost(fi), Kapit  nfi, Ervencei, Paschingar, Kerecs  nyi, Bosny  k and Biksz  di families certainly belong to this category.

41 Rich  rd Horv  th, "V  rak   s uraik a k  s   k  z  pkori Magyarorsz  gon. V  zlat a kutat  s n  h  ny lehet  s  g  r  l" [Castles and their Lords in Late Medieval Hungary. On the Possible Directions of Future Research], in *Honoris causa*, ed. Tibor Neumann and Gy  rgy R  cz, 63–104, with literature. It should be remarked that the tripartite division of noble residences which can be observed in Hungary (*castrum* – *castellum* – *domus nobilitaris*) is far from isolated: in France, ch  teau – masion forte – manoir (Contamine, *La Noblesse Fran  aise*, 153–60), in England:

beyond doubt. It had very evident defensive functions,<sup>42</sup> especially in case of Ottoman raids, which obviously enhanced the local authority of their owners. At the same time, they were envisaged as centres of power from which the neighbouring countryside might be terrorised and even armed opposition to royal authority organised.<sup>43</sup> It is no surprise, then, that only a handful among the families examined, and evidently those which were the less prominent among them by any standards, proved unable to acquire or build a *castellum* for themselves. The best proof of the social prestige which followed from the possession of at least one *castellum* is the fact that those persons who rose from the ranks of the conditional nobility (or the *prediales*) all helped themselves to one as soon as they were in a position to do so. This is clear in the case of Peter Gudovci and Stephen Prasovci, and also in that of Albert Pataki. The possession of a fortification can in this sense be regarded as the sign of an “accomplished rise,” which made it manifest to one’s neighbours that one had already entered the “upper regions” of the local nobility.<sup>44</sup> Along the same reasoning we may at least suspect that the motivation behind Andrew Kapitánfi’s marrying the widow of Nicholas Pozsegai was the desire to have a *castellum* of his own; after all, he had been viceban for several years, and while his colleagues in the office, Ladislás Szencsei and Peter Bocskai, had more than one each, Andrew still had to share one single fortification with his brothers. It is, moreover, surely not accidental that Francis Nelepeci, who made his way back to the top nobility after the catastrophes which had befallen his family in the 1460s and 1470s, set about the construction of a fortification on the remaining portions of

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castle – moated site – manor house (Michael Prestwich, *Plantagenet England 1225–1360*, Oxford: OUP, 2005, 18–19) seem to represent the same categories with the appropriate social patterns associated to them.

- 42 Already in the 1470s, when the Ervencei brothers made an agreement with Michael Oresjai and his wife and relatives, one of the stipulations maintained that “quandocumque fuga generalis Turcorum hoc regnum invadencium contingerit,” the Ervencei would be bound to let the other party into the castellum of Szvibovc “pro personarum et rerum suarum profugio et salute.” MNL OL, DL 103 771. Such an agreement could occasionally also be extended to the peasants, as happened in the case of Desnice between the Kapitánfi brothers and Ladislás Hermanfi (DL 107 065). That these agreements reflected real practice is proved by a case from 1494, when, in the course of an Ottoman raid, one of the tenants of Philip Businci indeed took refuge in Gudovc (“cum omnibus rebus et bonis suis ad oppidum Gwdowcz sepedictum introisset”), which then was already protected by a *castellum*: DF 231 939.
- 43 See, for instance, the order of the governing council to the Slavonian nobility from 1448: “plura essent castella et fortalicia in dicto regno Sclavonie, ex quibus plurima spolia et furticia perpetrata et commissa fuissent.” MNL OL, DF 218 793. As early as 1408 the later Batthyány were acquitted of the charge of infidelity on the grounds that on their estate of Szentjakab existed no fortification from where any act of infidelity could have been committed (Rácz, “Egy főnemesi család eredete,” 336, n. 186). In 1456 Simon Nagy and his companions were accused by the king of having committed all kinds of evil from the *castellum* of Garignica (Pálosfalvi, “Vitovec János,” 438), whereas in 1482 very much the same accusations return in the charter of king Matthias with which he declared Andrew Kapitánfi guilty of infidelity.
- 44 Cf. Prestwich, *Plantagenet England*, 19: “For the gentry, manor houses and moated sites provided a means of displaying wealth and demonstrating a position in society.”



his family estate as soon as he had manoeuvred himself into a position to be able to do so, and was willing to provoke resistance which reached the royal court and involved the greatest magnates of the neighbourhood in order to get it completed.

Somewhat in contrast to castles, numbers counted evidently, in striking accordance with the charter of 1490 cited above; otherwise it would be difficult to explain why Ladislas Hermanfi, who had possessed two *castella* since 1469, nevertheless rebuilt a third one, that of Újudvar, which had been in ruins at the time of its acquisition in 1456. Yet from the present point of view the most important is the undeniable correspondence between the *egregius* title and the possession of at least one *castellum*. With very few exceptions,<sup>45</sup> all the *castella* in the late medieval county of Körös which were not owned by the families examined in the present book, belonged to magnate families which otherwise also possessed castles there. And almost all those who did not possess any within our target group, belong to those whose rise into the *egregius* stratum proved ephemeral and did not involve substantial material acquisitions.<sup>46</sup> The only real exception is the Kerhen family, which, to judge by the long and successful career of Michael Kerhen, surely did not lack the means to acquire or build a *castellum* of its own; if we are not in fact cheated by a mere illusion caused by the lacunae in the source material, there is no plausible explanation for this fact.<sup>47</sup>

As for the market towns, it seems that their possession reached less deep on the social ladder than that of *castella*. In general, it can be said that all those families with castles, and many of those with at least one *castellum* possessed at least one market town as well. These two groups roughly contain those families whose members were regularly titled *egregius* by our sources. In this sense, the joint possession of a fortification of whichever type, and of a market town, seems to be an important social marker within the leading nobility of the county. Then comes another group with a *castellum* without a market

45 One of the few exceptions is the Moravci family: Paul was szolgabíró in Körös at the very end of the fifteenth century (MNL OL, DL 46 406, DF 232 029), and in 1524 a *castellum* is mentioned at Moravc owned by Paul and his two sons (DF 277 175/331–33 ecw).

46 Fodorovci, Jakószerdahelyi, Kopinci, Orros, Pálfi, Tompa. The exception in this sense would be the Pataki family, which, despite the erection of a *castellum* at Vinarc, proved unable to remain a member of the noble élite.

47 Sometime in the 1510s the son of Michael, Nicholas Kerhen, did begin the construction of a fortified house on his possession of Banc, which belonged to the castle of Berstyanóc. That it was intended to be fortified is implicitly proved by the protest of Balthasar Batthyány, who tried with all possible means to prevent Nicholas from finishing his house. The conflict ended with a compromise: Balthasar consented to the building, but with the condition that Nicholas Kerhen would never be allowed to erect a *castellum* at the same place to the detriment of his own *castellum* of Mogor (MNL OL, DL 104 538: “idem Nicolaus Kerhen aut sui heredes in eodem loco dicte domus et curie nobilitaris castellum sive fortalitium aliquod in preiudicium veteris fortalicii sive castelli eiusdem Balthasaris Mogor vocati, in cuius vicinitate possessio ipsa Bancz sita foret construere et erigere non valeat neque possit”).

town, which is characterised by the irregular attribution of the *egregius* title. Yet, as usual, there are important exceptions to the rule: the Berivojszentiváni, for example, who boasted both a *castellum* and a market town, only received the title intermittently, whereas Elias Bosnyák, or the Kerecsényi, who are never recorded as having an *oppidum*, are titled *egregius* all the time nevertheless. Here, as elsewhere, one has to count with factors which are simply impossible to examine upon the surviving source material: the size of the market towns, and the eventual existence of fairs and markets and the revenues stemming from them,<sup>48</sup> which evidently influenced the social status of their owners and their capacities to dominate. In one sense the number of market towns seems to be an excellent and undeniable indicator of social stratification, nevertheless: namely in defining the line demarcating our group of well-to-do nobility from the aristocracy above. If one compares the list of aristocratic wealth expressed in terms of castles, *castella* and market towns in 1490<sup>49</sup> with the similar list above, it becomes evident that it is the number of the latter which marks most saliently the difference between the aristocracy and the rich nobility below: whereas, with but one exception, the number of

48 The inclusion of fairs into the analysis as a further factor of measuring noble wealth would probably not add too much new information to the discussion. On the one hand, references to fairs are even more sporadic than the mentions of market towns; they most frequently turn up in connection with acts of violence committed against people going to, or coming from, fairs. On the other hand, whatever information we have seems to prove that fairs were in fact a dominant feature of market towns, so that their investigation would lead to the same conclusions. In the period under discussion here, the following fairs are mentioned as held by landlords other than barons and ecclesiastical institutions (in brackets I indicate the reference, always only one, and the family, or the successive families, which owned the locality which hosted the fair): Bradna [Smičiklas, *Codex Diplomaticus*, vol. XVIII, 294, Hásságyi]; Rojcsa [Lukinović, *Povijesni Spomenici*, vol. V, 171, Dersfi]; Szentbenedek [MNL OL, DF 282 495, Dersfi]; Jakószerdahely [Lukinović, *Povijesni Spomenici*, vol. V, 171, Jakószerdahelyi, Kamarcai]; Ludbreg [Lukinović, *Povijesni Spomenici*, vol. V, 571, Turóci]; Szentmihály near Kemlék [Lukinović, *Povijesni Spomenici*, vol. V, 571, Alapi]; Sabaria/Szombathely [MNL OL, DF 255 778, Szencsei]; Szencseszentdemeter [Csánki, *Körösmegye*, 37, Szencsei]; Garignica [MNL OL, DL 107 001, Pekri, Pozsegai, Batthyány]; Újudvar [DL 107 001, Stefekfi, Grebeni/Batthyány]; Gordova [DF 255 801, Fánics]; Szentlélek [DL 103 986, Kasztellánfi]; Dimicskfölde [DL 103 989, Kasztellánfi]; Kutenya [DL 103 828, Rohfi]; Dobrakucs [DL 103 828, Nelepec]; Racciaszentistván [DF 282 459, Gorbonoki, Dombai, Tahí]; Megyericse [DF 275 023, Megyericsei]; Berivojszentiván [DL 107 041, Berivojszentiváni]; Sabnicszentiván [DL 105 675, descendants of Isaac]. For a comprehensive list of markets and fairs in Körös county now see Boglárka Weisz, *Vásárok és lerakatok a középkori Magyar Királyságban* [Fairs and Staples in the Medieval Hungarian Kingdom] (Budapest: MTA BTK TTI, 2012), 148–50. Now, among all these fairs, only the locality of Sabnicszentiván is referred to as a simple possession, all the rest are hosted by *oppida*. Moreover, all the other fairs which turn up in our sources in the county of Körös are held in market towns. It is thus a very probable hypothesis that most of the market towns which were listed in the table above also hosted a fair, and they only remain unknown to us because of the silence of our sources. Thus, we arrive to the same sample as in the case of the *oppida* themselves, with the exception that this sample is a bit narrower and thus less fit for analysis.

49 Engel, "Világi nagybirtok," 52–53.

market towns owned by the aristocracy was at least three, but in the majority of cases considerably more, the non-baronial Slavonian families generally had but one or two. The real exception to this rule is the Batthyány family, with as many as six market towns at the end of the middle ages; it is no surprise, then, that they were the only family within our target group to enter the aristocracy definitively in the very years around Mohács. The Csupor, Kasztellánfi, Dersfi, Fánecs, Pogány, Tahi, Turóci, Rohfi and Pekri families, each with three or four market towns at some time, are not so evident exceptions; it should be remarked, however, that either baronial office-holding, or aristocratic marriages or both likewise signal out the first seven, whereas Louis Pekri precisely rose to become a dominant figure of the Slavonian nobility after having united his own paternal lands with the heritage of Peter Bocskai and the *castella* and market towns belonging to it. Thus the only exceptional case would remain that of the Rohfi, who, as we have seen, also proved anomalous in terms of their fortifications.

Here again, as with castles, we should avoid going too far in loading weight on numbers. The Kapitánfi brothers, having but one single *castellum* and one market town belonging to it, were as consequently titled *egregius* as the Dersfi with their two *castella* and three market towns. And they continued to be so even after they had been forced to share their possessions with Ladislás Hermanfi and Balthasar Batthyány. All that can safely be stated is that in the absence of other, more refined means for measuring noble wealth, the possession of castles, *castella* and market towns, coupled with the attribution of the *egregius* title, can be an acceptable indicator of social stratification, provided it is consequently further refined by the application of other means of social analysis. I will later return to this problem.

But at first we have to take a closer look at mobility within our target group, for such an analysis is the only means to refine the somewhat static picture drafted above. There were evidently very important changes in terms of wealth within the individual families, both downwards and upwards. Of course, in some cases these changes are much better documented than in others, the general rule being, as usual, that the lower we descend on the social scale, the less information we have; but the general tendencies can nevertheless be fairly well reconstructed. I will start with the ways of land acquisition, a topic rarely discussed on the basis of such a wide sample, and then deal with the forms and causes of material losses which, at least in some cases, could go as far as to undermine the social position of a given family or at least of a branch of it.

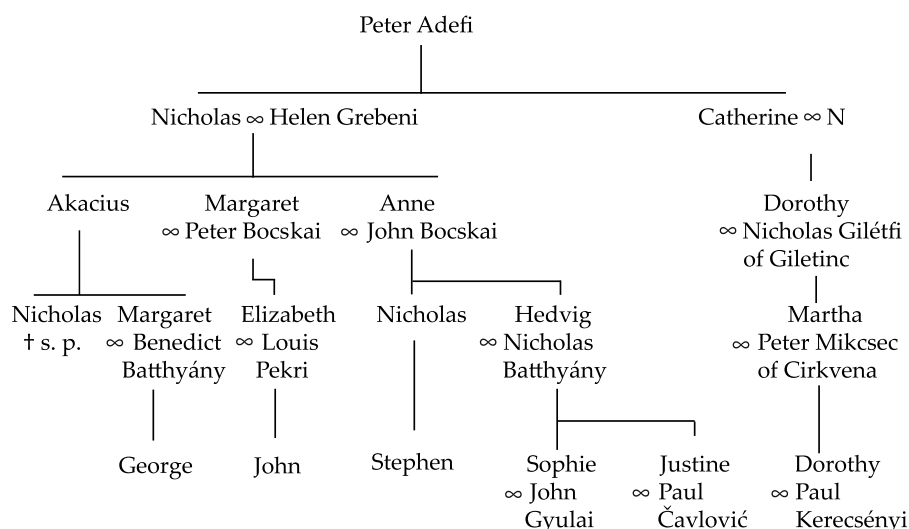
Later on a whole chapter will be devoted to the relationship between the nobility and the king, but it can safely be anticipated that, with the exception of the early phase of the reign of king Sigismund, and of very few later examples, royal power was not instrumental in the material advancement of the nobility. We have seen above that the confiscations which followed the revolts against Sigismund involved the last wave of considerable landed

donations in Slavonia. And even these donations, just like those of king Matthias in the second part of his reign, were used not to reward Slavonian noble families but to implant non-Slavonian families there. The only exception is Nicholas Gereci (Kristallóci), who received the estate of Kristallóc already as an inhabitant of Slavonia, and, perhaps, Martin Ders, who received his Slavonian lands in two consecutive waves. There were, of course, important temporary concessions, such as the *pro honore* donation of Kristallóc to Nicholas Bocskai under Sigismund, or that of Atyina to Elias Bosnyák at the end of the century, which could mean an important source of revenue for a limited period. But the great majority of land transfers were caused by other reasons.

As already mentioned, marriage played an important part in the settlement of non-Slavonian families in the province. And it played the same important role in the devolution of landed wealth within the Slavonian nobility. It was by marriage that Louis Pekri acquired the most valuable part of the Bocskai heritage; that Christoph Paschingar and Nicholas Pozsegai successively put their hands on the estate of Garignica; Balthasar Batthyány inherited the whole landed wealth of Ladislás Hermanfi by marrying his daughter (and by consequent paternal adoption), and Francis Nelepec obtained at least part of the Bosnyák heritage with the hands of Barbara Bosnyák, whereas the Tulbert estates were divided between the husbands of the three daughters of Nicholas Tulbertfi. Yet it was not only heiress-daughters who proved instrumental in the devolution of land: it was by marrying a widow that Michael Kerhen acquired parts of the Kamarcai lands, Ladislás Hermanfi obtained the estate of Mogor with the hands of Anne, widow of Ladislás Latk, and John Szencsei came into possession of the estate of Desnice by wedding the widow of Sylvester Kapitánfi; the examples abound. In most cases such inheritance was quite natural: in the absence of direct and collateral male heirs, no dispute could emerge between claims of various legal justification. What is conspicuous, however, is the indifference of royal authority with regard to land which could be regarded as having escheated to the crown, as well as the importance of inheritance on the female line. With one outstanding exception, that of Garignica, in the case of which king Matthias was ready to put in the full weight of his authority in order to secure the estate for his own candidate, royal power did not show much interest in the devolution of non-magnate estates. For instance, after the extinction of the Slavonian branch of the Kapitánfi family, their inheritance could by all possible standards be regarded as having escheated to the crown. And, indeed, Wladislaw II in 1515, and Louis II three years later, donated their portions first to Michael Pálóci and Ladislás Kanizsai, and then to Thomas Szécsi and the same Ladislás Kanizsai again. Introduction was hindered by contradiction in both cases, yet none of the grantees appears to have tried to assert his claims before the law, let alone get the lands by force. The estate was in practice shared by the Batthyány, who had a claim based on a treaty of

inheritance, by John Szencsei, who had married the widow of Sylvester Kapitánfi, and by the non-Slavonian branch of the Kapitánfi, whose exact relationship to their dead kinsmen cannot be established, but was certainly very distant.

A similar example is offered by the case of the estate of Szentlélek. After the heirless death of Nicholas Kasztellánfi, the king granted his lands, together with the castle of Szircs and the *castellum* of Szentlélek, to the influential castellan of Buda, John Bornemissza. The introduction was impeded by the contradiction of John Kasztellánfi, a kinsman of the late Nicholas by the fifth degree (5/5), and a great number of persons who had descended on the female line from Peter Kasztellánfi, great-grandfather of Nicholas. Their exact relationship to each other was the following:<sup>50</sup>



As can be reconstructed from later documents, Bornemissza did not try to assert his claim, and, while from the estate of Szircs John Kasztellánfi paid the filial quarter in money, the inheritance of Nicholas at Szentlélek was eventually divided by a handful of his kinsmen on the female line. It is interesting that both John Pekri and Sophie Batthyány based their claim upon the rights of their respective maternal grandmothers, whereas Stephen Bocskai on that of his paternal grandmother. What is really conspicuous, however, is that even the rights of Dorothy Miksec were recognised as stemming from the right of descent (*jure generacionis*), although, as we see it on the table, she descended from Peter through three female ancestors. Which, it should be emphasised, supposes the exact knowledge of her maternal kin for several generations.

50 Cf. MNL OL, DF 232 505, DF 232 597.

When Peter Bocskai died heirless, his closest kinsmen in the other branch of the family were either already dead, or beyond the fourth degree of consanguinity, the generally accepted limit of collateral inheritance,<sup>51</sup> but no royal donation seems to have been made, and Peter's inheritance was apparently smoothly gathered in by his son-in-law, Louis Pekri; he only had to cede the estate of Szentlőrinc to Wolfgang Szencsei, who inherited it from his mother. And even if there was a royal donation, not even influential local families were always able to make good their claims based on it: as we have seen, Paul Pan of Kravarina managed to stay in possession of Temenice, which he had acquired by marrying the widow of its late owner, for several years, even though it had been donated by Wladislaw II to Balthasar Batthyány and Peter Butkai, both well connected to the royal court. Roughly fifty years before, after the extinction of the Ost of Herbortya family, the Ostfi family from the county of Sopron laid a claim to their inheritance by right of kinship, although the degree of consanguinity between John Ost and Francis Ostfi was merely 6/7;<sup>52</sup> nevertheless, king Ladislas did comply with the demand and gave him the estate of Herbortya.<sup>53</sup> Finally, however, it was the Pogány of Cseb who prevailed through marriage. Of course, it could be argued that royal authority was on the wane in the first decades of the sixteenth century, but incidents such as that between Nicholas Székely and Francis Nelepeci show that even the Jagiellonian kings were able to intervene locally with force in defence of the interests of their confidential men if they judged it necessary. In most cases, however, the devolution of noble lands below a certain level was left to be decided by the interplay of local interests and influences.

That it was indeed so is proved by the futile attempts of Nicholas Dersfi to get a share in the Töttös and Tuz inheritance by the rights of his grandmother and mother respectively. His grandmother was Sophie Töttös, sister of Ladislas Töttös, with the hands of whose daughter, Dorothy, his lands had devolved upon the Várdai family. Yet the Slavonian estates, namely the district commonly referred to from the second half of the fifteenth century as Töttösevína, which lay astride the border between the counties of Körös and Zagreb, was not inherited by the Várdai, but was donated by king Matthias to Vuk Branković, titular despot of Serbia. Later on it was with the hands of his widow, Barbara Frangepán, that the estate was acquired by Francis Beriszló.<sup>54</sup> After the death of Barbara Nicholas Dersfi seems to have made attempts in order to get the estate, with the *castellum* then called Razohatec, but apparently to no avail; the estate was retained by Beriszló, and then passed on with the

51 Pál Engel, "Az Aba nemzetség alattyáni ága" [The Alattyán Branch of the Aba Kindred], in "Magyaroknak eleiről." *Ünnepi tanulmányok a hatvan esztendősk Makk Ferenc tiszteletére*, ed. Ferenc Piti (Szeged: Szegedi Középkorász Műhely, 2000) 133.

52 Cf. Engel, *Középkori Magyar Genealógia*, Osli nem.

53 Or, to be sure, the royal right in it: *Sopron vármegye története*, vol. II, 389–91.

54 For the family connections mentioned here and below see Engel, *Középkori Magyar Genealógia*, under the individual families, and also the biographical sketches above.



hands of his widow, Margaret Székely, to John Bánfi. In the case of Sophie Tuz, Nicholas Dersfi wanted before all to put his hands on her movables by right of inheritance, but the fact that he was her closest surviving relative was certainly not unrelated to his wish to acquire the castle and estate of Želin in the county of Zagreb, which had been inherited by Sophie from her first husband. But even in this case, although Nicholas managed to procure for himself a letter of introduction by right of pledge, his efforts yielded no result, and the estate was apparently retained in royal hands.<sup>55</sup>

Alongside marriage, a number of other means offered themselves for land acquisition. A similar but temporary form of expansion was guardianship, as when Peter Gudovci managed the Megyericsei estates in the name of his grandsons, or Ladislás Roh that of Berstyanóc for his stepson, Nicholas Tulbertfi. Ruthless and clever guardians could even profit from their situation to install themselves definitively in the lands they administered, such as Ladislás Hermanfi in the case of Mogor. Yet by far the most common forms of land accumulation were purchase and pledge. We have seen that those persons who disposed of considerable sums of money, that is, mostly the temporal administrators of the bishops of Zagreb, acquired most of their lands by these means. But others also spent a lot of money on enlarging their landed wealth. The best known case is, of course, that of Ladislás Hermanfi, whose charter legacy is full of such transactions normally extending to no more than a few parcels or a vineyard. But money also played a role in his bigger acquisitions. Although his stepson, Michael Latk designated him as his heir, Ladislás nevertheless gradually took into pledge almost the whole of his future inheritance. He managed to put his hand on the estate of Kristallóc by paying for the costly litigation that Ladislás Josafi pursued at Buda with the Vitovec brothers. Ladislás's heir, Balthasar Batthyány, continued the acquisition of land by purchase: he paid for both the estate of Garignica and that of Szvibovc. Ladislás Hermanfi and Balthasar Batthyány are exceptional not only because they are much better known than other persons: starting from the tiny inheritance of Ladislás's mother after 1445, the two of them had built up a landed wealth which included around 600 inhabited tenant plots, spotted with several fortifications; yet it seems that people such as Peter Bocskai or Ladislás Roh or Peter and Sigismund Pogány were also great buyers. Others, such as Louis Pekri, pursued a real "marriage policy:" at some time in the second decade of the sixteenth century he controlled, thanks to his own marriage and to those of his children, one castle and six *castella*, not counting the family fortification at Petrovina.

As a result, the place of a given individual in terms of material wealth could and did vary widely as measured at different points of time. In the cases enumerated above, the differences are obvious. Ladislás Hermanfi and Louis Pekri were several times richer at the time of their death than at the beginning

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55 MNL OL, DL 23 187, and cf. DL 23 189.

of their career. At some time in the 1470s Ladislas Rohfi, alongside having his share in the family patrimony, also possessed two castles by right of pledge and purchase respectively. But the material wealth of the Ervencei brothers was likewise at least doubled by the acquisition of Szobocsina, and Peter Miksec also became considerably richer after inheriting the entirety of the Cirkvenai lands. In other cases the lands of a given kin group were united in the hands of one of its members within circumstances which are unknown to us; apparently this is what happened to Vitus Garázda, who had aggregated most of the Kamarcai lands, a fact that surely played a role in the increase of his political importance. What should be emphasised in this respect, however, is that no matter how effectively these means of land acquisition were applied and combined, in themselves they offered no entry to the ranks of the magnates: no one could simply buy his way into the aristocracy. At the start of his career Nicholas Csupor was roughly as rich as Balthasar Batthyány in 1490, and both members of the court. Yet, whereas Nicholas became a magnate, thanks to the favour of king Matthias, shortly thereafter, Balthasar and his son, Francis, had to wait almost a quarter of a century before the grant of the huge estate of Németújvár finally opened the gate leading to magnate status. Thus, while it was apparently always possible for ambitious and talented persons to accumulate enough land, definitively or temporarily, to break into the *egregius* group, the further leap upwards was and remained dependent upon the royal will.

On the other hand, landed wealth was not only acquired but also lost. The most evident reason for losing estates was of course political misfortune. The political history of Slavonia and of the county of Körös within it reflects in its main lines the ups and downs of Hungarian history in general, with some important alterations nevertheless. The fifteenth century began with the revolts against king Sigismund, followed by a long period of peace. After the death of king Albert in 1439 there began a new "time of upheaval," which in Slavonia drew on until 1447, when the counts of Cilli recovered officially their authority in the banate, and, in a sense, until as late as 1453. The accession of king Matthias was again followed by a short period of political breakdown in Slavonia, after two of its greatest magnates, John Vitovec and Nicholas Újlaki had deserted to emperor Frederick III. The last turbulent period referred to in the charters as "*tempora disturbiorum*" immediately followed the death of king Matthias and lasted until the consolidation of the authority of Wladislaw II.<sup>56</sup>

All of these critical periods involved the risk for the nobility of losing some or even the majority of their lands. By far the biggest wave of confiscation followed the revolt against king Sigismund in 1403; most of the families which are studied in this book and were already present in Slavonia at that time

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56 See Pálosfalvi, "Cilleiek és Tallóciak" for the civil war after 1440; Idem, "Vitovec János," for the breakdown after 1459; and Kubinyi, "Két sorsdöntő esztendő," and Neumann, "Békekötés Pozsonyban" for the events in 1490–1492.

suffered its consequences in some form. Yet it must be emphatically stressed that in most cases the confiscations were either temporary or the beneficiaries belonged to different branches of one and the same family. Even the Szencsei were able to recover the estate of Fejérkő later. Perhaps the only real losers were the Pekri, whose ambitions to enter again the baronial élite were definitively undermined by the loss of the majority of their lands to John Maróti, and one branch of the Fácns, which was forced to emigrate, and, if my hypothesis is right, the Mihalc branch of the Szencsei family. The latter two fell out definitively from the ranks of the leading nobility, despite the fact that their kinsmen continued to belong to it until the end of the period.

Forty years later it was the Grebeni family who lost their whole estate of Greben to John Vitovec, and the Szencsei who had to resign that of Fejérkő for all. Here it was not recovering royal authority but rather the absence of it and the consequent struggle between rival baronial fractions which played a dominant role. The Grebeni as well as the Kristallóci (2) had to suffer the loss of their respective estates because of the unsatiable greed and aggressivity of Vitovec backed by the uncontrolled influence of Ulrich of Cilli in the court of Ladislav V. The Fácns, on the other hand, only temporarily lost their lands in the turmoil, and so did Stephen Dersfi after the death of king Matthias. The one and a half years which followed the passing of Matthias seem to have been a particularly agitated period in the history of Slavonia,<sup>57</sup> but the attitude of the local nobility was much more prudent than in 1403, and, although accusations were frequent, David Dombai appears to have been the only one to lose his lands for infidelity. The difference with respect to the events nine decades earlier is probably to be explained by the punitive measures taken by Matthias in 1481<sup>58</sup> and the reappointment as ban of Slavonia shortly before his death of Ladislav Egervári, one of his most faithful and most talented barons.

Pure violence as the cause for the loss of property was not limited to periods of weak royal power. The Nelepec and the Mindszenti lost their share in the estate of Dobrakucsa in the mid-1470s, and the beneficiary was precisely one of the new favourites of king Matthias, John Ernuszt. A case apart is that of Andrew Kapitánfi, who ran into infidelity for having misjudged his own possibilities as measured against the royal will. Judgements involving the loss of property without political overtones were a common feature throughout the period. Caspar Kasztellánfi (1465), the Kapitánfi brothers (1467), Dominic and Paul Nelepec (before 1470), Nicholas Pozsegai (1476), Francis Dombai

57 During the Slavonian congregation which ban Egervári held in the late summer of 1490, the local nobility presented to the ban "*plures cedulae plurimaque registra occupaciones possessionum, domorum et curiarum nobilium invasiones rerumque et bonorum ablaciones, hominum captivaciones, pactaciones, verberaciones aliorum eciam nonnullorum actuum poteciariorum patraciones post scilicet mortem et decessum quondam domini Mathie regis Hungarie ausu temerario per certos incolas dicti regni Sclavonie factas in se denotantes et exprimentes*" – MNL OL, DL 101 112.

58 On this topic see Tringli, "Szlavóniai közgyűlés," *passim*.

(before 1490) and the Gereci (1518) were all sentenced to forfeiture of their property before the law, but such decisions were never put into effect, and generally ended with some kind of compromise. Only the Nelepec among those listed above had difficulties consequent to their conviction, but these difficulties were most probably the cumulative result of the various miseries that the family suffered simultaneously. The punishment that hit the Pekri and the Kasztellánfi and perhaps also the Szencsei in 1496 was of a different nature, for obstructing royal tax-collection was indeed a grave offence, and the sentence was in fact followed by the culprits' temporarily losing their lands. Yet they likewise recovered them some years later, with the exception, apparently, of George Szencsei alone.

Important pieces of noble property were alienated by peaceful means as well, mainly by sale and pledge. In some cases such deals were purely nominal and involved no real transfer of land; in other cases, however, they resulted in important modifications within the landowning structures of the nobility. Thus, when Caspar Fáncs pledged all his portions to Andrew Alapi, or the Nelepec half of their estate to the Mindszenti, or Francis Dombai alienated his lands to his father-in-law, Peter Gudovci, these actions surely did not fail to affect their respective positions within the local nobility. Sometimes these alienations, originally surely destined to be temporal, resulted in the definitive loss of the majority of a family's lands. This is what happened in the case of the Szász of Tamasovc, whereas the Musinai had lost all their possessions in the county of Somogy by the second half of the fifteenth century. Others, such as the Ervencei and the Bakolcai, also belonged to the great losers. However, the social consequences of these losses and alienations apparently depended upon such hardly measurable factors as a given family's past and local prestige.

Thus, for instance, Ladislás Hermanfi was as consequently titled *egregius* in the early 1450s, when his possessions seem to have been restricted to the portions of his mother, as his father had been, and as he himself would be in the 1480s after the acquisition of hundreds of tenant plots. In the same way, George Szencsei continued to be reckoned as member of the leading nobility after his share at Szencse had been reduced to a handful of plots in the late 1490s. Again, Francis Nelepec was offered the occasion of a new rise in the first two decades of the sixteenth century after the family lands had been reduced to trifles in the second half of the fifteenth, and also their family castle had been lost. In all these cases, it was seemingly the "social capital" accumulated by the preceding generations which helped them to survive the difficult periods. The same phenomenon also seems to have contributed to maintaining the social status of the Pekri in the 1440s, when the family's fortune reached its nadir, although, as we have seen above, even the remaining parts of their patrimony were considerable. A very interesting case is that of the Musinai; although their remaining lands in Körös were by no means in keeping with their illustrious descent, the latter nevertheless opened for them marriage possibilities which would certainly have been beyond their means otherwise. In other cases the

losses had fatal consequences, however. The repeated alienations of Emeric Szász of Tamasovc relegated his son into the ranks of the petty nobility, and the Mindszenti also dropped from the top nobility after their losing the half of Dobrakucsa and their portions at Garignica. So did the Kristallóci 2, after the estate of Kristallóc had been violently taken from them in the mid-1450s. The general rule seems to have been that those families were fatally vulnerable to such material losses which had recently entered the ranks of the leading nobility from below, and did not have enough time to build up sufficient social prestige through marriage or other means to secure their survival there in hard times.

### 3.3. SERVICE, OFFICEHOLDING AND FAMILIARITAS

*Familiaritas* was one of the basic institutions of late medieval Hungary, and its discussion as a form of vertical relationship within the nobility is an inevitable part of all works dealing with the medieval nobility. Consequently, many valuable insights into the structure and functioning of this institution have been offered since the almost hundred-year-old study of Gyula Szekfű.<sup>59</sup> Yet no effort has so far been done at analysing it at a regional level, upon the basis of the evidence offered by a cluster of families belonging roughly to the same social category, with a clear emphasis on the various forms and social effects of the institution.

“When you write to me that you have faithfully served all your lords in your youth, and now that you are old you do not want to do the contrary, we know and have learnt that you have been serving all those princes who have had you in their service so fervently that there is no room left for ignominy, and we do not think that you need any admonition. So if we prompted you for good, you should by no means take it as an offence, for certainly we have no doubts as to your person; yet you have to admit that you also have people at your service who, if you fall in strength and they get loose, can cause us harm.” It was with these words that ban Emeric Perényi responded to the letter of his indignant viceban, Balthasar Batthyány, in the critical days of March 1513.<sup>60</sup> This brief passage in itself reflects several of the basic features

59 Gyula Szekfű, *Servientsek és familiarisok* [Servientes and Familiares], *Értekezések a történeti tudományok köréből* 23/3 (Budapest: MTA, 1912). More recently: Rady, *Nobility, Land and Service*, 110–31, with literature.

60 DL 107946/26 ecw: “Deinde ubi scribitis omnibus dominis vestris in juvenia fideliter inservivisse, modo in senecta nolletis contra facere, scimus et experti sumus omnes eos principes qui vos quoque servitores habuerunt eo studio servivisse ut ignominie nullus sit locus relictus, neque nos dubitamus in vobis moneri nec debitis. Ubi hortati sumus vos ad bonum hic contra vos factum nihil debet, quia certe ad personam vestram nichil dubitamus; tamen admittatis vos quoque servitores habere qui si effaceres et liberi permittuntur dampna nos affici poterimus.”

of the institution of *familiaritas* in the late medieval kingdom of Hungary. First of all, noble service, although generally rewarded in various ways, involved fidelity, and gave birth to a special ethos of service with mutual obligations of both lord and *familiaris*. Secondly, any given individual could serve a number of different lords during his career. Thirdly, some at least of the *familiares* had people at their own service, that is, they were lords and *familiares* at the same time, assuming both roles simultaneously. These aspects, however, cannot be all examined thoroughly here; what I would like to offer is some general patterns of the institution with regard to the group of nobility which is the object of the present book.

## Kasztellánfi

Name	Period	Lord(s)	Office
Adam	1404–1405	bans Paul Besenyő and Paul Pécsi	viceban of Slavonia
Peter	1409	Andrew, bishop of Zagreb	<i>vicarius temporalis</i>
	1417	John, bishop of Zagreb	castellan of Orbász
	1427–1432	Idem	<i>vicarius temporalis</i>
	1436–1440	ban Matko Tallóci	viceban of Slavonia
Caspar	1443	ban Matko Tallóci	
	1447–1449	ban Ulrich of Cilli	viceban of Slavonia
Sigismund	1440	ban Matko Tallóci	castellan of Béla
Nicholas	1458–1461	ban Nicholas Újlaki	viceban of Slavonia
	1466	ban John Vitovec	viceban of Slavonia
Akacius	1466–1468	ban John Vitovec	viceban of Slavonia
	?	the King	[in the castle of Novi]
Nicholas	1512 (1515)	Clara Rozgonyi [widow of Kanizsai]	castellan of Vasmegeyricse
George	1492	duke Lawrence Újlaki	castellan of Kontovc
	1496	duke John Corvin	
	1498–1499	ban George Kanizsai	viceban of Slavonia
	1505–1512 (?)	archbishop Thomas Bakóc	
	1512	[ban Emeric Perényi]	tax collector of Slavonia
John	1520	the King	court <i>familiaris</i>
	1524	Idem	<i>aulicus levis armature</i>
	1525–1526	Idem	court hussar

We have seen in the biographies of the individual families that service played without exception some role in their history. In some cases at least the scene of this service could be the royal court; this will be the subject of a later



chapter. But it was more frequently not, not even in the case of families which provided barons, and this is an important marker which separated them from the aristocracy. Downwards, again, stratification is much more difficult to establish. To put it very simply, two basic patterns emerge. The first can be illustrated by the examples of the Kasztelláni and Szencsei families, which flourished for a sufficiently long period to supply much useful information.

## Szencsei

Name	Period	Lord(s)	Office
Paul	1395–1401	ban Nicholas Garai	viceban of Croatia
	1402	the King	member of the court
Ladislás, son of John, son of George	1417	ban David Lack	<i>ispán</i> of Zagreb
	1427–1434	ban Herman of Cilli	viceban of Slavonia
Ladislás, son of John, son of Tibold	1437	ban Matko Tallóci	castellan of Jajce
Ladislás jun.	1459–1464	ban John Vitovec	viceban of Slavonia
	1470–1471	ban Blaise Magyar	viceban of Slavonia
	1477–1479	ban Ladislás Egervári	viceban of Slavonia
	1482–1483	ban Blaise Magyar	viceban of Slavonia
John	[1469]	bishop John of Pécs	
George	1492	Ladislás Egervári	<i>alispán</i> of Pozsega
	1494	bishop Oswald of Zagreb	
	[1496]	duke John Corvin	
	[1507–1509]	ban Andrew Both	
	1509	Bartholomew Beriszló, prior of Vrana	
Francis	1496	duke John Corvin	
Nicholas	1517	ban Peter Beriszló	

The basis of qualification is the group of lords served: it is evident from the table that, apart from the king, these families served either the ban of Slavonia, or the bishop of Zagreb, or, eventually, one of the magnates having possessions in Slavonia. All the families with at least one *castrum*, and most of those with more than one *castellum*, who, as we have seen above, were regularly titled *egregius*, belong to this group. But not to the exclusion of others: Elias Bosnyák, for example, although having only one *castellum*, and even that not from the beginning of his career, makes part of this group nevertheless. Of course, comparison is difficult between families like the

Kasztellánfi and the Szencsei on the one hand, and between the Pozsegai and Lónyai, on the other, whose career in Slavonia was restricted to one generation. In some cases, moreover, we have no reference at all to any service undertaken by any member of a given family, which, of course, can be a result of the nature of our documentation. It is thus, as in the case of the number of fortifications, no more than a very vague indicator; the concordance is nevertheless interesting.

Below this large group another, much smaller one, can be identified, which can perhaps be characterised by the term of “two-level” *familiaritas*. Members of these families also turn up in the service of the leading political authorities of Slavonia, that is, the ban and the bishop, as well as of the local magnates, but they also engaged themselves to persons who can by no means be regarded as magnates; indeed, some of them figure in the previous group, such as Nicholas and David Dombai in the following table, which summarises the career of Michael Kerhen:

Period	Lord	Office
1468	Nicholas Dombai, castellan of Atyina	
1474	George Forster, castellan of Szentgyörgyvár	
1477	Sigismund Ernuszt, bishop of Pécs	castellan of Kapronca
1483	ban Blaise Magyar	viceban of Croatia
1484–1489	ban Matthias Geréb	viceban of Slavonia
1487	Sigismund Ernuszt, bishop of Pécs	castellan of Kapronca
1493	ban Ladislav Egervári	viceban of Slavonia
1494–1495	bishop Oswald of Zagreb	castellan of Garics
1504	David Dombai	
1504, 1511	duke Lawrence Újlaki	castellan of Racsa

Of course, it would be quite wrong to regard the career of Michael Kerhen as wholly representative of an entire group within the nobility. As in all similar cases, we must suppose the working of a whole series of personal motivations and considerations which surely played a role in shaping the career of any given individual. After all, the initial position of Kerhen when he joined the family of Nicholas Dombai must have been quite different from his situation when, after three terms as viceban of Croatia and Slavonia, he returned to David Dombai a good thirty years later. This phenomenon of “long-term fidelity” is by no means exceptional: to give but one example, all the lords served by members of the Cirkvenai family belonged to the Csupor family, to whom they were evidently linked by special ties of affinity. In fact, their case, as that of Michael Kerhen, shows the limits of the approach based on *familiaritas*. Despite the fact that he occasionally served lords who were never

titled *magnificus*, he himself always received the *egregius* title, and, as his two terms in the office of (Slavonian) viceban, and his multiple commissions on behalf of the Slavonian nobility show, he was one of the most esteemed members of the latter.<sup>61</sup> Moreover, one of his kinsmen was member of the royal court under king Sigismund, which means that not even immediate royal service can be automatically treated as a demarcation line. Likewise, Peter Miksec, while serving Stephen Csopor as his castellan of Monoszló, was as consequently titled *egregius* as his lord. It should also be taken into consideration that this approach fails to reflect the important differences within the individual families: for instance, in the case of the Grebeni, Szencsei and Ervencei families, which I regarded as part of the first group, whereas at least one branch of each should in fact be counted to the second. Yet the very extent to which these branches should in fact be regarded as constituting one and the same family is a problem which deserves an analysis of its own. Nor is this approach apt for measuring differences between the statuses of individual members within the entourage of any great lord; the mere fact that two persons serve the same lord does not automatically mean that they occupy the same social standing within the nobility, of course.

The somewhat false view produced by this approach, which would put on the same footing, for instance, the Kasztellánfi and the Mindszenti families, on the sole basis of the lords served, can remarkably be improved by involving two more factors into the investigation. I have collected from the period envisaged all the *szolgabírák* in the county of Körös, and also, but not exclusively, those persons who turn up as designated royal (palatinal, banal) men. A brief analysis of these lists justifies the statement made by Pál Engel, according to which “the status of the royal man, at least socially, could not be very distant from that of the *szolgabírák*.”<sup>62</sup> I have also gathered all those persons who were elected as noble jurors from 1486 until after the death of king Matthias, when the institution was abolished.<sup>63</sup> Although impossible to prove in detail within the framework of the present book, it is evident that, in the late middle ages, most of the *szolgabírák* and of the royal men, as well as the noble jurors, were elected from among the petty nobility undistinguished by either wealth, title, or service. It is thus reasonable to suppose that those families on our original list, whose members at least sometimes turn up as either *szolgabíró* or royal man, functioned as a kind of intermediate link

61 In his case one could refer to a remark made by Tibor Neumann, according to which “even rich noblemen could begin their career in the service of lesser lords.” Cf. Neumann, *Korlátkövek*, 123. Yet even this will not account for the fact that he returned to David Dombai towards the very end of his career.

62 Pál Engel, “Királyi emberek Valkó megyében” [Royal Men in the County of Valkó], in idem, *Honor, vár, ispánság*, 587.

63 On the institution of elected jurors after 1486 see Tibor Neumann, “Választott nemesi esküdtek Nyitra megyében” [Elected Noble Jurors in Nyitra County], *Századok* 139 (2005): 261–88.

between the lower and upper strata within the nobility of the county, belonging in a sense to both, sometimes consecutively, sometimes simultaneously, along a division within the same family. I will return to this problem later on.

The Berivojszentiváni, Borotva, Budor, Fodorovci, Gereci, the Slavonian-based branch of the Garázda, Horzovai, Kamarcai/Jakószerdahelyi, Kerhen, Kopinci, Kristallóci (2), Kustyer, Megyericsei, Miksec of Cirkvena, Mindszenti, Musinai, Orros, Pálfi, Pataki, Raveni and Stefekfi families all make part of this group, and so do the poorer branches of the Grebeni, Szencsei and Ervencei families. Not surprisingly, several among them can also be found on the list of "two-level" *familiaritas*, which, as we have seen, largely covers the group of families variously titled *egregius/nobilis*. Here, again, there are important exceptions to the rule, which need to be assessed separately each.<sup>64</sup> The situation is very similar to that observed by Engel in the county of Valkó: in some cases we find lists which contain "better" names.<sup>65</sup> Five cases are exceptionally conspicuous: those of George Dombai,<sup>66</sup> Ladislás and Stephen Rohfi,<sup>67</sup> Stephen Kapitánfi,<sup>68</sup> George Kerecsényi<sup>69</sup> and John Tahi,<sup>70</sup> who turn up as royal men in the company of persons of an evidently inferior status; since they belong to the group constantly referred to as *egregius*, it is evident that their appearance should be explained by their special relationship to the petitioners. In the case of Dombai the link is provided by the magnate Marcali brothers, their neighbours in the county of Somogy, whereas for the Rohfi by the neighbouring monastery of Garics; the situation must have been the same with regard to George Kerecsényi, who appears as a royal man for archbishop Bakóc, his lord, and his relatives in his home county of Zala. The case of Stephen Kapitánfi, royal man for Stephen Csupor in 1484, is somewhat different; his emergence as such may be accounted for by the difficulties the family was going through after the infidelity of Andrew Kapitánfi, or by a special relationship to Stephen Csupor. As for John Tahi, his emergence as a royal man with regard to the Musinai family as late as 1519 may serve as a further indication of his "transitory" position shortly before his spectacular rise, and another element in the possible explanation for his rejection as ban of

64 Of course, I do not count those references which regard certain families *before* they arrived to Slavonia: for instance, the Kerecsényi frequently appear as royal men in the county of Zala in the first half of the fifteenth century, and so do the Hásságyi, or the Kecser in Sáros later on; nor are they regularly titled as *egregius* then. When they appear in Slavonia, however, they are consequently accorded the title, and never (or only exceptionally, as George Kerecsényi) appear as designated royal men.

65 Engel, "Királyi emberek," 590.

66 MNL OL, DL 33 416.

67 *Levéltári Közlemények* 12 (1934): 118, 119–22.

68 MNL OL, DF 255 889.

69 MNL OL, DL 101 233.

70 MNL OL, DF 209 455.

Slavonia by at least a part of the Slavonian nobility.<sup>71</sup> What has to be stressed, however, is that in these cases the appearance as royal man was strictly exceptional.

Apparently a case apart is that of Nicholas Fáncsi, who turns up both as a royal man and a noble juror; since, however, we have seen that unlike his kinsmen he was almost without exception titled simply noble, he represents the same “intrafamilial” division as the poorer branches of the Grebeni, Szencsei and Ervencei families. Conversely, there are cases where the “group” appearance of persons of a more elevated social status as royal men is accounted for by the special character of the occasion itself. Such, for instance, is the situation at the introduction of John Maróti into the confiscated lands of the Pekri in 1404, with Ladislás and John Roh, Ladislás Kristallóci, Egidius and Nicholas Gorbonoki, and Benedict Nelepeci among the designated royal men,<sup>72</sup> or of the Tallóci brothers into the estate of Szentgyörgyvár in 1439, where, alongside the Megyericsei brothers and Paul Garázda, Herman Grebeni and Briccius and Nicholas Gorbonoki appear in the same function;<sup>73</sup> or, again, at the introduction of the Bánfi brothers into the estate of Orbona in 1476, where Peter Bikszádi, Emeric Pogány and Michael Hásságyi were designated;<sup>74</sup> while John Maróti played a leading role in helping to consolidate the rule of Sigismund, the Tallóci brothers were key political figures during the reign of Albert of Habsburg, and Nicholas Bánfi was in the 1470s one of the most esteemed magnates in the court of Matthias, so the commission must in all three cases have been rather a matter of prestige, reflecting the authority of those involved. We do not have to suppose that all of them were linked by ties of service to the person(s) being introduced; it was rather their higher prestige which made them worth designating. It is even more obvious in 1481, when Ladislás Hermanfi, Peter Gudovci, Stephen Csupor, Ladislás Szencsei and Ladislás Roh were designated as special royal men for the perambulation of the estates of the bishopric of Zagreb and bordering them from the royal castle lordship of Medve.<sup>75</sup> After the fall of John Tuz and the congregation of Zagreb, this was a matter of utter political importance, and is thus to be regarded as exceptional. Yet the most important point is that, apart from these special cases, none of the persons constantly titled *egregius* ever turns up as either royal man or *szolgabíró*, and in this sense the concordance is complete. Consequently, there existed a group of rich nobility for whom both the office of *szolgabíró* and designation as a royal man were evidently out of keeping with their social status, or only possible with regard to magnates; interestingly

71 It should be remembered, however, that the beneficiary of the case, John Musinai, was then the secretary of cardinal Bakóc.

72 MNL OL, DL 8901.

73 Teleki, *Hunyadiak kora*, vol. X, 63.

74 MNL OL, DL 33 429.

75 MNL OL, DL 37 582.

enough, all the families which moved to the county of Körös in the course of the period under investigation belong to this group.

There was of course much more to *familiaritas* than the social stratification it indicates; at least some of these need to be discussed here, for they clearly show both the limits and the possible directions of any approach based on this institution. First of all, we have seen above the important role that the institution played in geographical and, to a far lesser extent, social mobility. And here, there is an interesting observation to be made: whereas several families from outside Slavonia came to be rooted there due to baronial service, we do not find, with possibly the only exceptions being one branch of the Kapitánfi family, and the Garázda branch of the Vojk kindred, rich noble families from the county of Körös transferred through service and settled definitively in other regions of the Hungarian kingdom. It may be that possibilities of employment in the region were abundant, and if we look at the lords, we indeed find that the bans, the bishop of Zagreb and the local magnates offered more than enough possibilities for service; the cases for which we have enough evidence show that local magnates employed at least as many non-Slavonian noblemen, at least as castellans, as Slavonian ones.<sup>76</sup> It does not of course mean that the nobles of Körös did not leave their native land on service, be it military or administrative in nature; it simply means that they regularly returned there, and do not seem to have ambioned the acquisition of land elsewhere. Moreover, if we take into consideration how frequently estates in Körös were petitioned for from, and granted away, by the ruler, frequently with no practical consequences, it is impossible not to draw the conclusion that, despite the evident and ever increasing Ottoman threat, the land south of the Drava must have seemed rich enough for settlement there.<sup>77</sup>

Geographical relocation did not necessarily involve the reception of important donation of land from one's lord: as stated above, a good marriage with a local heiress sufficed for self-establishment in the region. This solution,

76 Thus, Bartholomew Drágfi apparently brought his castellan of Vasmegyericse in the early 1490s, called Benedict Sásvári, from the county of Ung (MNL OL, DL 20 102); the castellans set by George Bátori in Izdenc in the 1510s, John Gétyei and Ladislás Mekksei came from Abaúj and Baranya respectively, and Mekksei was changed for John Fajsz from Somogy later (DL 82 488, DF 255 994). Sigismund Pogány himself imported a person, tellingly called Benedict Zalai, to be his castellan in Herbortya (DF 276 919).

77 This, of course, is a statement to be tested upon material from other counties. From the county of Ung, studied by Pál Engel, at least two branches of the Botfalvi family migrated to other regions of medieval Hungary: the Both probably followed archbishop George Pálóci and settled in the county of Esztergom in the first half of the fifteenth century, whereas some members of the Dacsó of Ór at least, as mentioned above, were transferred to Baranya and thence to Körös in the late fifteenth century. See Engel, *Ung megye*, 68, 141, and the chapter on the Bakolcai above. On the other hand, we know of no families "imported" there before 1440. The situation can evidently have changed thereafter, and so there is presently no control material with which the sample from Körös could be compared.



however, was only available for persons rich and respected enough at the time of their arrival to Slavonia, such as the *familiares* of the counts of Cilli, or the Rohonci, the Turóci or Nicholas Pozsegai and Francis Kecer. For these people *familiaritas* was but the way by which they crossed the Drava, not the means of getting rich there. It is thus important to examine the financial and economic background of *familiaritas*, especially since it is sometimes supposed to have served as an important means of self-maintenance and of the struggle against impoverishment.<sup>78</sup>

To start with, we have to distinguish between the military-governmental duties carried out in the service of lords, which made part of the nascent "state administration," and the functions discharged in one lord's estate management. The former comprise all the military posts, but also castellanships and the vicebanship as well as the alispánates one held from lords, such as the ban or ispáns of the neighbouring counties, who in a sense represented state authority. The latter, on the other hand, cover all those posts, such as castellanships of privately owned castles and different functions within estate administration, which one assumed within the framework of a purely private engagement. It is of course still impossible in the late middle ages to draw a strict line between public and private administration, which considerably overlapped; in Hungary, as in contemporary England, "public order and private power were inseparable."<sup>79</sup> Yet in terms of remuneration it was a different thing to be the ban's castellan in one of his Croatian castles, than to govern, for instance, one of the Újlaki castles in Slavonia. Whereas in the first case the payment of the *familiaris* depended, at least in theory, upon the sums allotted to his lord from the royal budget, in the second it depended on the sources available from estate management itself, and was at least partly conditional upon the effectiveness of the *familiaris* himself.

From the first half of the period our evidence is scarce, but from what we know about the constant penury of the bans of Slavonia, and also those of Jajce, in the second half of the fifteenth century and in the decades before Mohács, it seems very unlikely that their *familiares* were any more regularly paid than themselves. From the time of Ladislas Egervári on, banal salaries can be shown to have been constantly on arrears, if they were paid at all.<sup>80</sup> We

78 Fügedi, *Elefánthyak*, 189, and following him Rady, *Nobility, Land and Service*, 112–13.

79 Carpenter, *Locality and Polity*, 283.

80 Teleki, *Hunyadiak kora*, vol. XII, 133; Šišić, *Rukovet spomenika*, 321–23; MNL OL, DL 46 234 (Egervári); DL 37 721; DF 254 494 (Duke Corvin); Andrew Both converted to the defence of the banate "non solum privatas res et bona sua" but also the dowry of his wife, Anne Csáki (DL 68 171), and Peter Beriszló likewise "varia et diversa debita hincinde contrahere et levare coactus sit" for the same purpose (DF 219 287); moreover, he had put into pledge several objects in the chapter of Csázma, evidently for the same reason, which were ordered to be redeemed by the treasurer (Tkalčić, *Monumenta*, vol. III, 112); according to the words of Francis Batthyány, "mihi ad rationem banatus huius regni Sclavonie nondum unum dederunt denarium" (that is, the royal couple) (MNL OL, DL 104 441); Thallóczy–Horváth, *Jajca*, 210–11 (the bans of Jajce).

do have evidence of sums paid to the ban's men, but these amounts hardly did more than cover the expenses met in the course of the service itself.<sup>81</sup> And we have a lot more examples of unpaid services, such as in the case of Louis Pekri, who in 1512 refused to hand over the important castle of Bihać until his salaries and those of his own men were paid.<sup>82</sup> It is thus surely not accidental that we find very few Slavonian noblemen serving in the Croatian castles. The bans normally did not dispose of the tax of Slavonia,<sup>83</sup> which seems to have been used for the most urgent needs of the royal treasury, and were allotted instead various other financial sources, such as the thirtieth of Zagreb. A more promising solution was the joining in the hands of ban Peter Beriszló the bishopric of Veszprém and the priory of Vrana, but even he appears to have been in constant need of money.<sup>84</sup> Since most of the bans did not have possessions extensive enough to put them into pledge in order to make money, or grant them straight away in return for service, this solution was not available either. The only exception was duke John Corvin, who mortgaged a good part of his immense possessions to pay off his enormous debts;<sup>85</sup> it is thus no wonder that his longtime, and unpaid, *familiaris*, Balthasar Alapi, was the only one in our period to rise into the richest nobility of Körös through service by getting the estate of Nagykemlék after more than a decade of service.

There were, of course, other ways by which an influential lord could proceed in favour of his *familiars*. The bans, for instance, could intervene at any time in the workings of the banal court, which were held by the vicebans in their name, as did Matko Tallóci in 1437, when he ordered his deputies and the *szolgabírák* of Körös to prorogate the lawsuits of Ladislas Szencsei, who was then in his service at Jajce.<sup>86</sup> The same request was addressed by ban Emeric Perényi to the banal court in 1513 in favour of his own *familiars*.<sup>87</sup> Judicial assistance could assume other forms as well: ban Ulrich of Cilli played an instrumental role in Christoph Paschingar's acquisition of Garignica. In 1515, ban Peter Beriszló asked his viceban, Balthasar Batthyány, to intercede for Francis Nelepeci with duke Lawrence Újlaki, who wanted to demolish his newly constructed *castellum*. It was evidently ban Matko Tallóci who helped Demetrius Csutor to obtain the bishopric of Knin. The lords' influence should also be seen as instrumental in at least some of the cases when their *familiars* had access to the royal court, although our evidence here is anything but

81 MNL OL, DL 104 220; DL 104 635.

82 Pálosfalvi, "Bajnai Both András," 290.

83 See for instance the letters of treasurer Benedict Batthyány to the tax collectors of Slavonia in 1507: MNL OL, DL 107 946/10–14 ecw.

84 András Kubinyi, "Beriszló Péter és budai szereplése" [Peter Beriszló and his Activities at Buda], in *idem*, *Főpapok, egyházi intézmények és vallásosság*, 173, 175.

85 Schönherr, *Corvin János*, book IV, chapter III, *passim*. See also MNL OL, DL 88 872, DL 88 902.

86 MNL OL, DL 74 492.

87 MNL OL, DL 107 946/27 ecw.

direct. In the same way, the “faithful men” mentioned in the royal licenses of castle building, upon whose request the charter was accorded to the petitioner, seem to have been the very lord and, perhaps, his friends or allies at court.<sup>88</sup> Lordly support (that is, the influence of cardinal Bakóc) was evidently in operation behind the efforts of the Musinai brothers to regain their family land in Somogy, and to oust their uncle from the estate of Musina, and it was in all probability frustration caused by the impotence in the face of pressure from upwards that manifested itself in the impetuous words of Bernard Musinai cited above in a different context. This kind of semi-official support and protection from above was by no means characteristic only in Hungary; quite to the contrary, it is a phenomenon which was known and generally practiced throughout Europe in the late middle ages.<sup>89</sup>

Yet lordly protection had its obvious limits, and those who ignored them could get into serious trouble. The most outstanding example is that of Andrew Kapitánfi of Desnice, who, as we have seen above, married after the death of Nicholas Pozsegai his widow, and occupied the estate of Garignica. Having realised that king Matthias had plans of his own concerning the estate, he at first tried to come to terms with the ruler in person, then turned as a matter of fact to his lord, ban Ladislas Egervári. The latter, why admitting that he personally did not object to his viceban’s obtaining Garignica, which would make him “as happy” as if he received it himself, at the same time made it very clear that he would by no means counter the king’s will; he refused to send his man to the king with the excuse that it is perilous to confront the ruler “even for the powerful.”<sup>90</sup> In the end, the obstinate Andrew Kapitánfi lost not only Garignica but also his portions of the family lands, and even fled from the kingdom for some time. Yet it was again *familiaritas* which saved him a little later: he joined another local magnate, Nicholas Bánfi, at that time one of the dominant figures at king Matthias’ court, and thanks to him at least the chance was given to him to win back some of his paternal lands by juridical process.

To oppose the royal will was dangerous even in times of peace; it was even more dangerous to finish on the losing side in a civil war. And here *familiaritas* played its role as well. We have seen that several Slavonian noble

88 HHStA, Erdődy 11094: “ad nonnullorum fidelium nostrorum humilime supplicationis [...] per eos pro parte fidelium nostrorum egregiorum Stephani et Georgii filiorum condam Gaspar Chwpor de Monoslo nostre propterea porrecte maiestati,” as we read in the license accorded to the Csupor brothers.

89 “Support at law, backing for officers, the securing of posts in royal or municipal, as well as seigneurial, establishments: these were the para-governmental services that lords provided to their followers:” John Watts, *The Making of Politics. Europe, 1300–1500* (Cambridge: CUP, 2009), 249.

90 MNL OL, DL 103869: “malum tamen est cum regia maiestate contendere eciam potentibus [...] nobis enim summe placeret ipsam possessionem apud manus vestras permanere ac si proprie nostris manibus daretur.”

families, whose members had joined either the bishop of Zagreb or the prior of Vrana, lost, at least temporarily, some or all of their lands in the troublesome years around 1400. Nicholas Pekri lapsed into infidelity as the castellan of Raholca of Ladislás Újlaki, and failed to regain his lands even after his lord had been granted pardon. A generation later the Pekri again shifted to the wrong side as *familiares* of Ladislás Garai, although this time some members at least of the family were saved by choosing a magnate protector from the other camp. Nor were these confiscations for infidelity limited to the stormy periods around 1400 and 1440. Ladislás Ervencei got into trouble in 1471 as one of the leading *familiares* of bishop John of Pécs. Although he seems to have got off unharmed then, ten years later was proscribed again by the nobility of Körös. He was immediately pardoned by the king, however, upon request "of many among our faithful men", that is, in all probability upon the intervention of ban Ladislás Egervári, among whose followers both Ladislás and his brother turn up around this time.<sup>91</sup> David Dombai was convicted of infidelity as a partisan of king Maximilian of Habsburg in 1491, and later on he followed his lord, duke Lawrence Újlaki, into rebellion and was accordingly deprived of his lands for some time. It should be remarked, however, that these confiscations normally did not have fatal consequences; sooner or later all delinquents were able to regain most of their lands. As already mentioned, the only notable exception here is the Pekri family, which definitively degraded into the ranks of the common nobility thanks to their opposing king Sigismund in 1403.

To be a castellan in one of the Slavonian castles of the Újlaki or Garai family was in normal conditions a matter of private engagement, and only assumed political dimensions in times of crises. Unfortunately, we know almost nothing about the ways whereby noblemen in magnate service were remunerated. From other regions of medieval Hungary we do have such contracts of service, which show that rewards of castellans normally consisted of revenues in money and kind, completed by judicial fines.<sup>92</sup> From Slavonia the only detailed agreement that has come down to us is the contract between John Ernuszt and Balthasar Batthyány from 1505. Ernuszt entrusted to Batthyány the whole estate of Szentgyörgy with one castle and two *castella*; Batthyány was obliged to recruit and maintain the whole personnel of the three fortifications and the lands belonging to them, including a given number of horsemen and foot soldiers for each of them. For these purposes he was allotted 800 florins in ready money, 2000 *cubuli* of wine, 600 *cubuli* of oat, poultry, cheese, and other commodities. The estate of Szentgyörgyvár was surely the greatest in the county of Körös, and Batthyány was not an ordinary castellan but a kind of supreme estate administrator, and it is impossible even

91 MNL OL, DL 103 953: "ad nonnullorum fidelium nostrorum humillime supplicacionis instanciam."

92 Rady, *Nobility, Land and Service*, 119.

to gauge how much money he came off with after he had discharged all his duties for Ernuszt.<sup>93</sup>

We do know cases, however, when such service ended with evident losses. Shortly after the death of Nicholas Újlaki his son, duke Lawrence, appointed Ladislav Ervenci as his castellan of Raholca. When the contract expired, Ervenci found himself losing 160 florins "in ready money, other revenues and victuals;" moreover, the duke confiscated not only his movables but also his charters which he had taken to Raholca for safety's sake.<sup>94</sup> Although it would be going too far to conclude from one such example that magnate service was never lucrative, some considerations support indeed the view that *familiaritas*, whether "public" or "private", in the service of lay lords, at least, was not an easily available means of getting rich.<sup>95</sup> Namely, none of the two greatest gatherers of land in our period, that is, Ladislav Hermanfi and Peter Bocskai, can be shown to have been active in service other than as vicebans. We will return to this institution in a moment, yet it can be stated in advance that it was not a well of money either. Since both of them had very considerable financial sources at their disposal, it is evident that they acquired the money they had by other ways; indeed, both Ladislav Hermanfi and Peter Bocskai can be shown to have been interested in trading activities,<sup>96</sup> which at least suggests that the key to understanding their success should be looked for in this direction, and not in terms of service. And they were surely not alone in engaging in economic activities: in 1495 Nicholas Tulbertfi received 400 florins for horses which were bought from him for the king's use; horses that were obviously bred for sale.<sup>97</sup>

Another phenomenon which seems to argue against the overall profitability of service, in terms of both revenues and influence, is the short term of contracts. Although, again, the evidence from the first half of the fifteenth century is meagre, thereafter a fairly quick rotation seems to have been the rule. We have seen that Balthasar Batthyány was hired for a year; in

93 MNL OL, DL 102 307.

94 MNL OL, DL 103 883: "in quadam convencione seu disposicione inter ipsum Laurencium duces ab una et prefatum Ladislaum exponentem partibus ab altera ratione castellanatus castri Rahowcza vocati facta et habita in promptis pecuniis ac aliis proventibus et victualibus eidem exponenti ad valorem centum sexaginta florenorum auri dampna intulisset."

95 This, again, would not be a unique feature of the Hungarian situation. It has been remarked with regard to contemporary England that the "sums earned in such service (ie. noble employment) were not normally large." Carpenter, *Locality and Polity*, 125.

96 Ladislav Hermanfi referred in his last will to important sums which were owned to him by merchants who lived in nearby towns (MNL OL, DL 107 608); in 1497, the wife of Peter Bocskai is providing market for the wines of her husband's kinsman, Sigismund (DF 262 304). Before 1450 Benedict Turóci turned in vain to the town council of Pettau "von etwas güts und klainaid wegen," which had been taken from him there, and eventually was involved in a private war with the men of the archbishop of Salzburg, the lord of the place. Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv, Vienna-Salzburg, Erzstift (798-1806) AUR 1450. 11. 25.

97 Engel, *Geschichte*, 163.

the 1520s his own son, Francis, employed Ladislas Ervencei for a period of two years as his castellan of Greben. In other cases, where the temporal sequence of officeholders can be established, the same phenomenon can be observed.<sup>98</sup> Quick rotation excluded as a matter of fact the *familiares* from that intimate relationship which would then yield the benefices of lordly protection enumerated above. The system employed on ecclesiastical lands, before all those of the bishop of Zagreb, seems to have been different: episcopal administrators were employed for several years, which must have played a key role in their enrichment.<sup>99</sup>

Yet the management of great lay estates also became an increasingly complex affair, as the growing number of seigneurial accounts from the 1470s on show. Most important of all, it involved at least an elementary level of literacy. Yearly written accounting, the written administration of royal and seigneurial taxes, meant that the office of castellanship assumed a more economic character.<sup>100</sup> It is from around 1500 that the twin offices of castellan and *provisor*, the first of a military nature, the second an economic post, tend to be united in the hands of the same person, and the second office increasingly comes to the fore.<sup>101</sup> It is an evident indication of the fact that the military character of the office ceded before the more down-to-earth responsibilities of estate management; what the lords needed, then, was not soldiers but administrators, and a poor but literate nobleman could be more useful than a

98 Of course, a detailed analysis of this problem will only be possible after the complete archontology of medieval Hungary had been completed. What we have now is but glimpses through especially well documented cases, such as that of the castle of Szentgyörgyvár. Here between 1474 and 1492 we have five sets of castellans (1474: George Forster [MNL OL, DL 103 765]; 1476: John and Emeric Zamárdi [DF 262 134]; 1479: John Földvári of Zubor, two persons with the same name [DF 255 844]; 1485: Stephen Nekcsei and John Losecki [DL 19 408]; 1492: Ladislas Daróci and Benedict Cseneháza [DF 255 915]), which certainly hints at a fairly quick rotation.

99 Peter Gudovci was *vicarius temporalis* of the see of Zagreb for at least fifteen years, and Balthasar Hobetić acted as *provisor* of Csázma for seven. Stephen Prasovci also served from at least 1522 until well beyond Mohács, although in his case the information for the period after 1526 is very incomplete.

100 In the Batthyány archives, the richest not only in Slavonia but probably from an all-Hungarian perspective as well, the first seigneurial accounts appear in the 1470s, and become fairly general in the Jagiellonian period. After 1500 the regular written administration of all incomes and expenses seems to have been the rule, at least on the major estates.

101 MNL OL, DL 104 058 (1497): "provisor castelli Zenthlelek;" DL 107 119 (1498): "Luca fabro provisor curie [...] castri Pekrecz;" DL 26 120 (1506): "Georgius provisor curie castri Zthenyznak;" DF 279 477 (1512): "provisor castri Maioris Kemlek;" DF 256 049 (1516): "Georgius Pyzac provisor curie et castellanus [...] castri Zthenychnyak;" DF 252 281 (1517): "castellani castelli Zoppya et provisoris curie de Zalathnok;" DL 34 333 (1523): "castellano et provisor curie castri Velike." The examples abound, even restricted to Slavonia. It is worth remarking that the Lucas "faber" mentioned in 1498 was probably a peasant, as was, certainly, the *provisor* of Szentgyörgyvár in 1523, titled merely *providus* (DF 232 660). It is also interesting to observe that both Elias Bosnyák and Balthasar Hobetić were merely *provisores* of Jajce and Csázma respectively.



rich one who had his own lands to care for simultaneously. A case in point is that of George Kápolnai, a petty nobleman from Körös, who made his fortune as castellan-*provisor* of Velike, in the service of the Kanizsai family.<sup>102</sup>

It does not mean, however, that the old patterns of fidelity disappeared. Apart from his brief baronial career, Nicholas Dombai never served other lord than Nicholas Újlaki. In view of the fact that his lands lay in the immediate neighbourhood of the Újlaki estates, this was nothing but natural. His son, David, was even brought up in the court of the Újlaki family, so it was no less natural that he not only served duke Lawrence but also followed him into rebellion twice, suffering as a consequence the loss of his patrimony. Nevertheless, in his testament he designated the duke as the chief protector of his goods and of the executors of his will, for "as I have trusted his lordship in my lifetime, so I continue to trust him after my death."<sup>103</sup> Such unbroken fidelity may have been rare and rooted in a special relationship, the details of which remain hidden to us. We have seen that Sigismund Gereci had been brought up in the court of George Bátori, who then commended him as a matter of fact to the service of his brother, the palatine.

In other cases the motivations of service are fairly clear and hint at factors which are generally left out of consideration when the institution of *familiaritas* is treated. George Szencsei, for instance, is expressly stated to have been prompted to change his lords in order to recover his lost lands by whatever means possible.<sup>104</sup> Similar reasons may have underlain the adherence of John Musinai to the archbishop of Esztergom. In 1517 Elias Bosnyák, in the course of an inquisition, was said by one of the witnesses to have perpetrated an act of violence "in order to extol his name and glory, as was his habit, with his lord the margrave."<sup>105</sup> The envy of glory, then, and participating in the power and influence of one's lord may also have provided a strong stimulus, although difficult to grasp; in any case, something similar very probably moved Louis Pekri when, in 1510, then in the service of ban Andrew Both of Bajna, he ordered to cut the arms of peasants who resisted forceful tax exaction. On the other hand, other persons' apparent reluctance to enter any forms of service, if not simply a false image reflected by our sources, may be explained by the simple lack of drive. Or by a kind of division of labour: whereas, for instance, Peter Bocskai was in office almost without a break, his

102 MNL OL, DL 25 657, DL 25 690–91, DL 25 713, DL 25 721, DL 34 333, DF 277 175/419–21 ecw.

103 Borsa, *Balassa család levéltára*, no. 471: "quemadmodum in vita mea in sua dominatione confisus fui, sic et post mortem atque decessum meum in dominatione confido."

104 MNL OL, DL 25 510: "Georgius Zemchey ante hac gessit se pro familiare Andree Both et eius viribus nitebatur possessiones et bona illa invadere et obtinere atque accipere, sed postquam apud eundem falx sua metere seu falcare non potuit divertit se ut fertur ad servicia domini prioris Aurane, cuius facultate huiusmodi invasiones et occupationes conatur attentare."

105 MNL OL, DL 37 949: "volens ut consueverat extollere nomen et gloriam suam apud dictum marchionem dominum scilicet suum."

kinsmen, Sigismund and John (the latter with a brief exception in the 1460s) apparently assumed no office at all; generally staying at home, they could consequently be asked by their much travelling cousin to keep an eye on his lands and family. Such a reason may have played a role in the conspicuous inequalities in terms of service between the different branches of the Kasztellánfi, Rohfi and Fánics families, for instance; service meant almost continuous absence from one's family estates, the management and supervision of which certainly necessitated some kind of intra-familial cooperation.

We should not forget, on the other hand, that the magnates were also interested in attracting the top layer of the nobility into their service, with the aim of enhancing their prestige and sphere of influence.<sup>106</sup> This presented to the rich nobility favourable conditions for negotiation and offered choices which they were ready to exploit. Thus, in 1494, when duke Lawrence Újlaki approached George Kasztellánfi with an offer to confer upon him the castellanship of Raholca, one of the chief fortifications of the Újlaki family, an offer which Kasztellánfi seems to have turned down with excellent political intuition.<sup>107</sup> That such practice was common is proved by another letter from 1516, according to which the widow of George Kanizsai directed a similar offer to three among the leading noblemen of the region, Ladislás Bencsik, Louis Pekri and Sigismund Pogány; what the offer contained exactly is not known, but Louis Pekri responded that "had he not been detained by the urgent business of his lord he would come" to her service, which makes it evident that she had offered them some kind of leading position in her *familia*.<sup>108</sup> This demand on the part of the lords surely explains at least some of the shifts in the individual careers.

A special aspect of *familiaritas* in Slavonia should be given separate treatment because of its outstanding importance, namely the one concerning the office of viceban. It has been known for a very long time that the deputy of the county ispán was the *familiaris* of the latter, was appointed and dismissed by him at will, and, consequently, knowledge of the deputy can even be helpful in determining the person of the ispán himself. In many cases the alispán can be proved to have served his lord both before and after being his deputy at the head of a given county, which seems to support the view that it was the will of the ispán alone which determined the choice of his deputy, and

106 The situation was again very similar in late medieval England, see Given-Wilson, *English Nobility*, 80.

107 MNL OL, DL 108 322: "Scribit nobis dominus noster graciosus ut vobis intimaremus vosque interrogaremus si castellanatum castri sui Rahowcza ita habere vultis sicuti ipse dominus noster graciosus vobis dabat an non."

108 MNL OL, DL 25 574: "Ludovicus de Peker respondit ad litteras v(estre) m(agnificencie) ut si nimium in arduis negociis domini sui non fuerit occupatus, constituetur in serviciis v(estre) m(agnificencie)."

the local noble community had no role to play in the process.<sup>109</sup> This traditional view has recently been partly questioned, at least with regard to the second half of the fifteenth century,<sup>110</sup> yet repeated protests by the nobility, and the consequent royal enactments prescribing that the alispán should be elected from among the nobility of the county where he would function (1486), and that he should belong to the well-to-do nobility of the same county (1492), attest that the problem was an acute one.<sup>111</sup> There were, of course, important territorial differences; where the office of ispán was monopolised by local magnates, their deputies were as a matter of fact elected from the ranks of the local nobility, who gravitated around these magnate families. In other counties, however, where the ispán himself had no lands, he could choose his deputy from his native region and impose him upon the nobility of the county he governed.<sup>112</sup>

Slavonia, and the county of Körös, was in several regards a region with peculiar features. By far the most important difference was that the judicial authority of the Slavonian vicebans was much more considerable than that of the ordinary county alispáns. Whereas in Hungary proper the judicial competence of the county court, headed in practice by the alispán, extended to only minor criminal cases, and all cases concerning noble property rights were as a matter of fact transmitted to the central courts, or, more frequently, were initiated there,<sup>113</sup> the banal court enjoyed full authority to judge cases involving noble property, and could even make judgements inflicting capital punishment.<sup>114</sup> Although the judicial office of the judge royal functioned as a kind of court of appeal for suits from Slavonia, these were generally either confirmed there or relegated to the ban for final decision. By the fourteenth century at the latest, the Slavonian nobility had developed a complex system, which, based on the cooperation of the vicebans, the banal prothonotary, and the szolgabírák, guaranteed their control of the banate's judicial machinery.

Although the Slavonian nobility maintained that it was the local noble community which had traditionally enjoyed the right of electing the banal prothonotary, we have reasons to suppose that in fact he was generally appointed by the ban. Consequently, in the course of the fifteenth century the

109 József Holub, "A főispán és alispán viszonyának jogi természete" [The Legal Nature of the Relationship between the Főispán and the Alispán], in *Emlékkönyv Fejérvapatak László életének hatvanadik évfordulója ünnepére* [Festschrift for the Sixtieth Birthday of László Fejérvapatak] (Budapest: Franklin Társulat, 1917), 186–211, for the traditional view.

110 Richárd Horváth, "A Felső Részek kapitánysága a Mátyás-korban" [The Captainship of the Upper Parts in the Age of Matthias], *Századok* 137 (2003): 939; Norbert C. Tóth, *Szabolcs megye működése a Zsigmond-korban* [The Functioning of the Authorities of Szabolcs County in the Age of Sigismund] (Nyíregyháza: Szabolcs Községért Kult. Közhasznú Közalapítvány, 2008), 38–39.

111 Rady, *Nobility, Land and Service*, 170.

112 In general see Kubinyi, *Mátyás király*, 34.

113 C. Tóth, *Szabolcs megye működése*, 97.

114 Pálosfalvi, "Grebeni Hermanfi," II, 281–82.

system was further refined in order to better reflect the interests of the provincial nobility. Profiting from the troubles which followed the accession of king Matthias, the Slavonian nobility elected in the person of Paul Mikcsec the first prothonotary who was directing simultaneously both seats of Körös and Zagreb. Although some years later the king again forced them to accept his own candidate as the banal prothonotary, from the 1470s it became customary to elect a deputy prothonotary in case the prothonotary was not a local nobleman, and held a parallel position in the royal court. This deputy prothonotary, called *viceprothonotarius regni Sclavonie*, carried out virtually the whole judicial activity of the two banal seats, and was consequently one of the most influential members of the local nobility. In practice, he kept the official seals of the vicebans, and issued with them all kinds of charters both at home and at Körös and Zagreb.<sup>115</sup> Most important of all, transactions of landed property were regularly put to writing before the deputy prothonotary.<sup>116</sup> Consequently, both he and the vicebans, whose seals he handled, had to enjoy the full confidence of the entire Slavonian noble community. All the more so, since the judicial sessions of the banal seats, with very few exceptions, were in fact headed by the vicebans and the prothonotary, even if the charters were issued in the name of the ban. From the 1480s on the vicebans were always simultaneously ispáns of Körös and Zagreb as well, and were titled one or the other depending on the location of the piece of property involved.<sup>117</sup> We have thus sufficient reason to suppose that the paramount influence of the vicebans was reflected in the way the office was filled.

In the fourteenth century we see the bans regularly taking to Slavonia their own *familiaries* from different parts of Hungary proper.<sup>118</sup> The latter can be regarded as “typical” in the sense that they served the same lord in different posts both before and after the latter’s holding the banal office, such as Martin Ders, who followed Detre Bebek from Slavonia to the county of Temes, returning again to Slavonia two years later, finally to become his lord’s deputy after his appointment as palatine. Moreover, most of these vicebans do not seem to have owned any land in Slavonia, nor did they acquire possessions there during their office-holding. In the first half of the fifteenth century some important changes can be observed. Although the counts of Cilli did also

115 In 1493 ban Ladislás Egervári transcribed a charter allegedly issued by the former vicebans, Peter Bocskai and Michael Kerhen (“litteras egregiorum Petri Bochkay de Razyna et Michaelis Kerhen de Belosowcz alias dicti regni Sclavonie vicebanorum”); yet the transcribed charter was in fact issued in the name of the ban, Matthias Geréb (“Nos Mathias Gereb de Wyngarth regnorum Dalmacie, Croacie et Sclavonie banus”), and merely confirmed with the seals of his deputies. In reality, however, the place of issue of the charter, namely Gudovc, proves that neither the ban nor his vicebans had anything to do with it. Cf. MNL OL, DL 68 717.

116 On this process see Pálosfalvi, “Grebbei Hermanfi” II, 284–90.

117 This statement is based on the examination of practically all the banal charters, so I make no special references.

118 Engel, *Archontológia*, vol. I, 16–19, with the relevant sections in the second volume.

import some of their own followers into Slavonia, all of them obtained lands in the province, and were thus as a matter of fact recognised as members of the local nobility. And, moreover, with one exception, one of their deputies was always a local nobleman. The last ban to appoint only one, non-Slavonian deputy was Denis Marcali, whose viceban was Ladislás Szöcsényi from the county of Somogy.<sup>119</sup>

In the course of the fifteenth century we still find vicebans who were taken to Slavonia from different parts of Hungary, such as Nicholas Antimus<sup>120</sup> (1442–43), Peter Szerecsen (1461–64), Paul Perneszi (1464–65), John Macedóniai (1466), Ladislás Veres of Szepes (1470) and Oswald Polányi<sup>121</sup> (1493). Again, none of them appears to have obtained any land in Slavonia during their service there. Yet a very important difference with regard to the preceding period is that they never assumed the office alone: and their fellow viceban was without exception a Slavonian nobleman. In this respect it is highly illustrative to observe what happened in 1464/1466, for instance. Early in 1464 one of the vicebans was Ladislás Szencsei, evidently appointed by John Vitovec,<sup>122</sup> while his companion in the office was the non-Slavonian Peter Szerecsen, a *familiaris* of Nicholas Újlaki. When, after the coronation of king Matthias, Újlaki reassumed the banship together with Emeric Szapolyai, and the latter appointed Paul Perneszi as his deputy, Újlaki dismissed Szerecsen and chose the Slavonian Ladislás Rohfi. In 1466 Újlaki changed again and appointed John Macedóniai, from the county of Temes, but his new colleague, John Vitovec, appointed Nicholas Kasztellánfi for his part. It seems, thus, that the rule had been established by then according to which at least one of the bans' deputy should in any case be elected from the Slavonian nobility, and this rule was respected by the bans themselves. This fact certainly hints at a certain influence which the local nobility exerted over the appointment of the vicebans, although the exact details of how it was channelled are impossible to establish. It is in the light of this development that the protest put forward by the Slavonian nobility against duke Corvin in 1495 is to be interpreted: for

119 In fact, the wife of Ladislás's brother, Benedict, held part of the estate of Gerzence before 1425 (HHStA, Erdődy 10093).

120 The brother of the grandfather of Nicholas Antimus did have connections and possessions south of the Drava river, but we know of no land in Slavonia held by Nicholas himself when he was viceban.

121 It is with Oswald Polányi, member of a family in the county of Vas which descended from the Hermán kindred, that I identify the deputy of ban Ladislás Egervári in the early 1490s. If this hypothesis is true, he was taken by his lord from Vas to Slavonia; yet, apparently, he was not completely unknown there at the time of his appointment as viceban. For his wife was Catherine Hásságyi, whom he had married before August 1484, and was thus related to a family already implanted in Slavonia in the 1490s. Oswald was later *szolgabíró* and then *alispán* in the county of Vas. See Gabriella Erdélyi, *Egy kolostorper története* [The History of a Monastery Process] (Budapest: MTA Történettudományi Intézete, 2005), 219–20, and MNL OL, DL 45 990 (called in 1484 *frater* by Stephen Hásságyi).

122 As we have seen above, in 1463 he was pardoned among the *familiares* of Vitovec.

what they stated, namely that the bans could *ab antiquo* only appoint persons with lands in Slavonia, was definitely untrue.<sup>123</sup> Yet if we suppose that Corvin at first only appointed John Gyulai as his deputy, and it was under pressure from the local nobility that he associated to him the Slavonian Bernard Turóci, we certainly come closer to understanding the case.

Other factors also deserve mention, however. From the second half of the fifteenth century the office of viceban was regularly assumed by the same persons returning to it under different bans. Thus, as we have seen, Peter Bocskai served as the deputy of bans John Ernusz, Ladislás Egervári, Blaise Magyar, Matthias Geréb and John Corvin. Ladislás Szencsei, for his part, served John Vitovec, Blaise Magyar and Ladislás Egervári before returning for a second time as the deputy of Blaise Magyar. Other vicebans who returned to office at least twice are Ladislás Rohfi, Louis Pekri, Ladislás Hermanfi, Michael Kerhen, Bernard Turóci, Balthasar Alapi and Balthasar Batthyány. Perhaps even more important, some of them remained in office independently of the change of ban: the most outstanding example here is again Peter Bocskai, who in 1482 was taken over from Egervári by Blaise Magyar, and remained in office even after the place of Magyar had been taken by Matthias Geréb. But others, such as Bernard Turóci and Louis Pekri, were also left in place by subsequent bans of Slavonia. This phenomenon also argues strongly against regarding the vicebans as simple *familiares* of the bans, despite the fact that the wording of the only appointment which has come down to us, namely that of Ladislás Hermanfi, seems to underpin the traditional view.<sup>124</sup> Another case also deserves mention in this respect. As we have seen, Caspar Kasztellánfi even suffered Ottoman captivity in the service of the Tallóci family, and played a role in collecting the ransom for Frank Tallóci. This experience must surely have reinforced the link attaching him to the Tallóci; yet only two years after the death of Matko Tallóci, and during the quasi-exile of Frank Tallóci, we see him emerging as the viceban of the counts of Cilli, the arch-enemies of his former lords. In view of what has been said above it would be wrong to see his change of lords as an act of ingratitude; rather, as an important building-block in the process of consolidation which involved concessions on the part of both governor John Hunyadi and the counts of Cilli, and was apparently based on the consensus of the local nobility.<sup>125</sup>

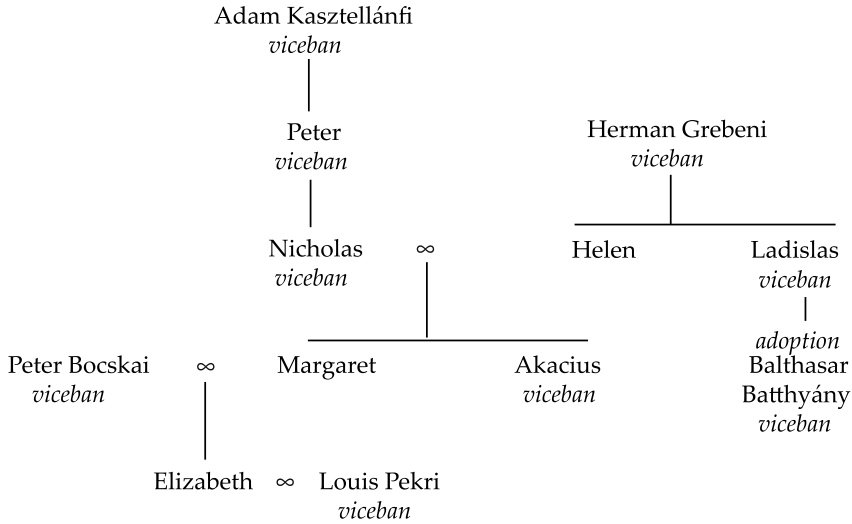
Equally important is the network of familial connections of which the most conspicuous illustration is the following graph:

123 Kukuljević, *Iura regni*, part II, 230: "in predicto regno Sclavonie semper et ab antiquo consuetudo per banos pro tempore constitutos observata fuisset, quod bani eorum officium vicebanatus aliis personis dare et conferre non potuissent nisi potioribus nobilibus familiaribus scilicet eorum in eodem regno Sclavonie possessiones et bona habentibus."

124 MNL OL, DF 268 086. The wording of the appointment shows striking similarities with that of royal documents which notified the appointment of ispáns to the county communities concerned.

125 On this see Pálosfalvi, "Cilleiek és Tallóciak," 90–94.

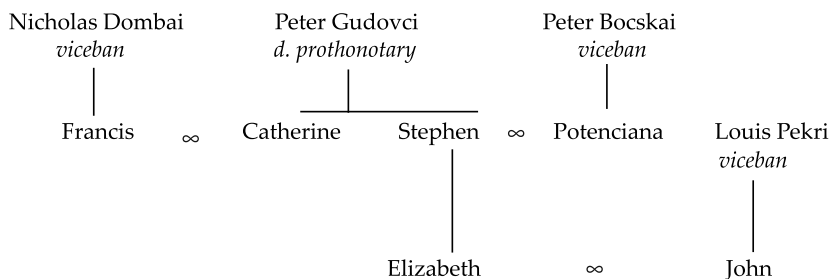




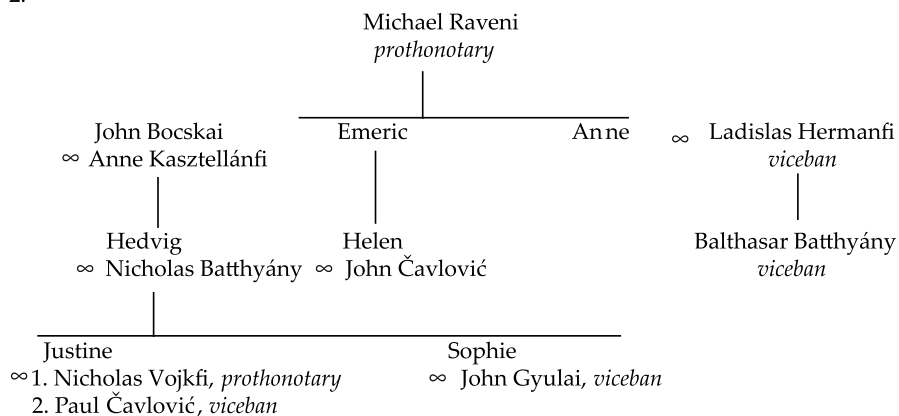
Four consequent generations of the Kasztellánfi followed each other in the office of viceban, and, in a sense, the tradition was continued on the female line, and even further than the graph shows, for Louis Pekri became the father-in-law of John Predrihoi, whose brother was also viceban. The same can be observed with regard to the Grebeni/Batthyány, where three generations succeeded to each other. Or even four, if we add that the second wife of Ladislás Hermanfi was Ursula Fánecs, cousin of Caspar, who alone assumed the office of viceban in his family. And the example, while illustrative, is not unique: we have seen that Ladislás Szencsei junior followed in the footsteps of another Szencsei, and was himself the maternal grandson of Andrew Rohonci, also viceban; the husband of another daughter to Andrew, Benedict Turóci, was also appointed as the ban's deputy. Bernard Rohfi "succeeded" to his uncle, Ladislás; Francis Nelepeci was the son-in-law of Elias Bosnyák, and Vitus Kamarcai became the father-in-law of Christine, sister of Paul Kerecsényi. This network of familiar interconnections involved also the more influential among the Slavonian prothonotaries, as the two graphs on page 366 show.

The second graph will become even more illustrative if I add that both parents of Hedvig Bocskai belonged to a family which also gave vicebans to Slavonia. Yet all this, of course, does not mean that marriage relationships necessarily played a role in the devolution of the office of viceban; what it does mean is that the office was from the second half of the fifteenth century virtually monopolised by a group of families which, as we have seen above, can also be distinguished in terms of their landed wealth. It is thus safe to say that the vicebans appointed from among this group of families cannot be regarded as *familiares* in the traditional sense of the word, but rather as representatives of an élite group within the top layer of the nobility from whose ranks the bans were obliged to choose their deputies; even such figures

1.



2.



of authority as duke Corvin were apparently no exceptions to the rule. It is highly characteristic that Michael Kerhen, while he was the deputy of Matthias Geréb, also turns up as the castellan of John Ernusz: it seems as if his “public” activity as viceban was entirely separated from his “private” engagement to a local magnate. It should be seen as a consequence of the special position of the vicebans that, even if the ban was a landowner in Slavonia, such as Ladislás Egervári, the two Kanizsais or duke Corvin, we never find any of their deputies simultaneously governing any of their local castles.

Needless to say, practically all the families which figure in this book, while serving more powerful lords, had their own *familiares*, more or less depending upon their wealth and current social standing. Anyone who had at least one fortification and some villages belonging to it needed at least some followers to supervise them and the tenants living there. Unfortunately, the examination of this problem is so much hindered by the nature of our sources that no serious analysis based upon them can be undertaken.<sup>126</sup> Even in the case of otherwise well documented families such as the Szencsei and the

126 On this problem see Pálosfalvi, “Grebeni Hermanfi,” II, 274.

Kapitánfi we know extremely little about the persons whom they kept in their service; this phenomenon seems to be a general one.<sup>127</sup> It is obvious that lords with several fortifications and hundreds of tenant sessions needed a much greater number of *familiars* than their poorer fellows; indeed, as I was able to demonstrate on the example of Ladislas Hermanfi, the richest among them were in a position to draw the petty nobility living in the neighbourhood of their lands almost completely into their orbit.<sup>128</sup> Yet even persons like Michael Berivojszentiváni and John Stefekfi had at least a handful of noble followers in their service,<sup>129</sup> and it is evident that the number of *familiars* employed, although obviously a source of authority, was not a decisive factor in determining the local respect of a given person.

One last aspect of service should yet be treated briefly. We have already seen the importance of literacy in the social rise of Peter Gudovci. We have at least two families in our sample in the case of which literacy and service conditional upon it played a lasting, so to say hereditary role. The first of them is the Megyericsei. Conspicuously, the entire career of the family was launched by a banal prothonotary, George Megyericsei, and his example was followed in almost every generation right until the end of the middle ages. John Megyericsei started his career as a notary of the royal court, and later became an influential member of Sigismund's entourage. His cousin, James, was later prothonotary of Körös, whereas in the next generation Emeric Megyericsei served the local nobility as szolgabíró. The series was completed by the other John, who, having served archbishop Ladislas Geréb as his secretary, briefly joined the court as royal secretary. The pattern is similar in the case of the Raveni. Here again, the example was set in the Angevin period by master John, notary of ban Nicholas, and maintained until beyond Mohács. Michael Raveni, royal attorney and prothonotary of Körös, was followed by Martin and Stephen Raveni, the latter serving as szolgabíró, then by John Raveni, notary and secretary of ban John of Corbavia, and finally by Michael, who rose to be Slavonian prothonotary after Mohács. The extent to which literacy was instrumental in maintaining the social prestige of these families is impossible to tell, but it is reasonable to suppose that it did play some role.

127 Neumann, *Korlátkövek*, 120–22.

128 Pálosfalvi, "Grebeni Hermanfi," II, 275–78.

129 They are generally mentioned without name, in cases of violent trespass, such as in 1477 with regard to Michael Berivojszentiváni: "egregius Michael de Berywoyzenithiwan nescitur quibus respectibus missis et destinatis quibusdam certis familiaribus" (MNL OL, DL 102 200).

## 3.4. THE NOBILITY AND THE KING

The king was the focus of political life in the medieval realm of Hungary throughout the middle ages. Royal power remained relatively strong even under the supposedly weak and incompetent Jagiellonian rulers. Wladislaw II proved powerful enough in 1495 to break with military force duke Lawrence Újlaki and his accomplices,<sup>130</sup> and as late as 1525 Louis II hoped that his personal presence would restore the order in the southern marches of the kingdom.<sup>131</sup> This is not to say, however, that nothing had changed. With regard to Slavonia only, on two occasions, in 1498 and 1508, the ban of Croatia and Slavonia revolted against the king, and at least in the last case the crisis drew on for years.<sup>132</sup> Such conflicts did take place before, as after the accession of kings Sigismund and Matthias, but always made part of a general political crisis, which involved more than one pretender to the throne. Even worse, in 1504 and 1524, the Slavonian nobility refused to accept the ban appointed by the king,<sup>133</sup> and on both occasions their efforts proved successful and ended with the election of another candidate. Such resistance would have been inconceivable during the reign of Matthias.

Yet it seems that the real ceasure in terms of the manifestations and functioning of royal power was the period following the death of Louis I. The model of the relationship between the royal court and the nobility in the Angevin period was elaborated by the late Pál Engel. This relationship was before all shaped and even determined by the immense royal domain and the revenues accruing thereof. All those persons involved in the government of the realm, either as barons or as knights of the court, were given a share in the produce of the royal estates, both in money and kind, for the time of their office-holding.<sup>134</sup> Even more important than the discovery of this somewhat archaic system was Engel's postulation of a fundamental break between those gaining access to the royal court and those noble masses whose life was regulated by the narrow and provincial rules of the "county" nobility. As Engel put it, the nobleman who entered the court and made his fortune there "broke out of the magnetic pull of his kin, from the simple member of a clan

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130 Engel, *Realm of Saint Stephen*, 360.

131 MNL OL, DL 104 452.

132 On these political crises see Pálosfalvi, "Bajnai Both András," *passim*.

133 Francis Balassa and John Tahi respectively.

134 Pál Engel, "Honor, vár, ispánság. Tanulmányok az Anjou-királyság kormányzati rendszeréről" [Honor, Castle, Ispánate. Studies on the Structure of Government in Angevin Hungary], in *idem*, *Honor, vár, ispánság*, 101–61.

he became an individual, and the place of solidarity to the kin was taken by personal fidelity to the king or to one of his barons."<sup>135</sup>

This system, at least as regards its material foundations, surely ceased to exist in the last decade of the fourteenth century, after the majority of the royal castles and their appurtenances had been granted away by king Sigismund. What remained was distributed after his death by his successor, Albert of Habsburg.<sup>136</sup> Unfortunately, no intellectual model as sweeping as that of Engel with regard to the Angevin period has been established for the remaining section of the middle ages. What stands beyond doubt is the enhanced political role of the magnates, whose wealth had been established by Sigismund, and was finally translated into the language of privileges in 1498.<sup>137</sup> This did not mean, however, that the royal court lost its attraction for other layers of the nobility; yet it is evident that the dichotomy of "court" and "provincial" nobility cannot be sustained any more as a conceptional tool for grasping a social and governmental system within which the king lacked the traditional means of rewarding services.

As regards Slavonia, the most important consequence of the reign of Sigismund was the dissolution of the once important banal *honor*.<sup>138</sup> Although the situation changed again after the Slavonian and Croatian banates had been definitively united in 1476, the maintenance of the Croatian castles, by then mostly deprived of their economic hinterland, was more a burdensome responsibility than a source of military might. The power of the individual bans depended consequently upon their landed wealth. In this respect the period of the counts of Cilli and of John Vitovec was the nadir of royal authority in Slavonia. In the possession of the Zagorje district with its several castles, completed by the fortifications in Körös and Zagreb, their influence was overwhelming in Slavonia. Moreover, both the counts of Cilli and Vitovec maintained a mercenary army of their own, completely independent of any royal license and free of control, which they put to use unscrupulously to enhance their territorial power base. It is no wonder, then, that between 1445 and 1464 they succeeded in pulling most of the leading Slavonian nobility into their political orbit, isolating them in a sense from royal authority. This isolation, as we will see, was never complete, yet neither governor John Hunyadi nor young king Matthias was able to intervene in Slavonia in the ways which were normal both before 1445 and after 1464.<sup>139</sup> The situation changed radically from the late 1460s, for none of the bans appointed by

135 Pál Engel, "Társadalom és politikai struktúra az Anjou-kori Magyarországon" [Society and Political Structures in Angevin Hungary], in idem, *Honor, vár, ispánság*, 302–19, the quotation is from p. 317.

136 Engel, *Realm of Saint Stephen*, 280.

137 On the process see *ibid.*, 342–43.

138 On the fate of the banal *honor* see Engel, *Archontológia*, vol. I, 16, and the sections on the individual castles listed there.

139 On this period see Pálosfalvi, "Cilleiek és Tallóciak" and "Vitovec János," *passim*.

Matthias and his successors enjoyed the territorial power in Slavonia once built up by the counts of Cilli and inherited by Vitovec. Some of them were given lands there by the king parallel to their appointment as ban, others already possessed estates in the province prior to obtaining the office, but Blaise Magyar, for instance, does not appear to have held a single parcel of land in Slavonia. And even magnates like Matthias Geréb, Ladislás and George Kanizsai and Emeric Perényi could not match the castle-based predominance of the counts of Cilli and of Vitovec.<sup>140</sup>

Not even the counts of Cilli and John Vitovec were able, and perhaps they did not even want to, cut all contacts of the Slavonian nobility with the king or the governor. Both before and after the peace treaty between John Hunyadi and the counts of Cilli which was agreed to in January 1447 we find Slavonian noblemen petitioning favours from the governor, and after the beginning of the personal rule of Ladislás V in January 1453 things almost returned to their normal course. When count Ulrich of Cilli was allmighty in the court, that is, before September 1453 and after May 1455, all ways to royal patronage led through his person, and in this sense the situation in Slavonia was not different.<sup>141</sup> It is, however, surely not accidental that the Slavonian nobility only turned to the king as a corporation in defence of their privileges after the death of the count, and before the consolidation of John Vitovec's power in Slavonia, that is, in February 1457.<sup>142</sup> The Slavonian nobility also appeared, perhaps in great numbers, at the assembly held at Buda in May 1458,<sup>143</sup> and later on in that year in the king's camp at Szeged.<sup>144</sup> After the rupture between king Matthias and Vitovec in January 1459 contacts seem to have become more sparse, but we have evidence attesting the presence of Slavonian nobles

140 Damian Horváth possessed the estates of Bagyanovc and Kustyerolc in Körös; John Ernuszt those of Csáktornya, Sztrigó and Dobrakucsá in Varasd and Körös. Ladislás Egervári received the castle of Velike from Matthias, whereas Matthias Geréb owned the appurtenances of Valpó in Körös, and so did Emeric Perényi later. The Kanizsai acquired Sztenicsnyák in Zagreb and Vasmegyericse in Körös. The territorial power base of Nicholas Újlaki in Slavonia was somewhat greater (Raholca, Kontovc, Racsá in Körös), especially if added to his estates in the neighbouring counties, but even his influence cannot be compared to that enjoyed by the counts of Cilli or Vitovec. The real exception thus remains duke John Corvin.

141 Pálosfalvi, "Vitovec János," 429–40, on the situation of Slavonia in the 1450s. It is to be remarked, however, that in 1456 count Ulrich of Cilli complained to the king that the Slavonian nobles had for some time petitioned for all sorts of legal documents not from the ban, that is, count Ulrich himself, but from the palatine and the judge royal, which is another proof that they still had the means of getting round the banal authority: MNL OL, DF 255 750.

142 MNL OL, DF 268 080.

143 Ibid.: "nostre maiestatis venientes in presenciam fideles nostri universi nobiles regni nostri Sclavonie."

144 Iván Nagy and Albert Nyáry Br., eds., *Magyar diplomáciai emlékek Mátyás király korából* [Hungarian Diplomatic Records from the Age of King Matthias], 4 vols. (Budapest: MTA, 1875–1877), vol. I, 38.



at the diet of May 1462<sup>145</sup> and March 1463, and on the latter occasion they were even mentioned by the decree issued.<sup>146</sup>

It is thus not surprising that the Slavonian nobility, among them those of Körös, were represented in great numbers at the coronation of Matthias in March 1464.<sup>147</sup> From this time on, and until the end of the middle ages, envoys delegated by the Slavonian nobility regularly visited the royal court in matters concerning their common interests. A detailed analysis of the development of the corporate identity of the Slavonian nobility cannot be undertaken within the framework of the present book; yet the persons who can be identified as acting on behalf of the local noble community in the presence of the king certainly merit a closer investigation. Their list, obviously far from complete, is on page 373.<sup>148</sup>

The list is illustrative in at least two regards. Firstly, with very few exceptions, we find on it those persons who belonged by any criterion to the top layer of the Slavonian nobility. Secondly, almost all of them were predominantly possessed in the county of Körös, which proves beyond doubt that they played a decisive role in the formation of the corporate identity of the Slavonian nobility and in its representation before the king. This is no matter for surprise: the nobility in the counties of Varasd and Zagreb was much less important both numerically and in terms of wealth than their peers in Körös.<sup>149</sup> Although the envoys elected by the entire Slavonian nobility were probably paid by the community, it was only natural to commission those who had the financial means anyway needed to undertake the expensive journey to Buda or wherever the king stayed. The attitude of the nobility of the county of Zagreb in 1524, when they simply confirmed the delegation of the envoys elected previously at the congregation of Körös with the justification that some of them also had lands in Zagreb, was surely not exceptional.<sup>150</sup> What is interesting, moreover, is the fact that among the three envoys only Balthasar Batthyány seems then to have had possessions in the county of Zagreb. On occasions, the presence of Slavonian noblemen at court could be quite massive, such as in May 1475, when it was possible to carry out an investigation among the nobility of Körös which gathered for the assembly of

145 MNL OL, DF 231 457.

146 *Decreta regni 1458 – 1490*, 134: “prelati, barones et nobiles regni Hungarie, Dalmaie, Croacie, Slavonie et partium Transsilvanarum.”

147 MNL OL, DF 255 770, DF 231 486, DF 276 966 (where the coronation is expressly referred to), DF 256 101, DF 231 491, DF 231 492.

148 The list contains only those persons who are stated by the charter itself in which they figure to have acted on behalf of the Slavonian noble community, and not those who can be identified to have participated as envoys of either of the Slavonian counties (Körös or Zagreb) to any of the general assemblies of the Hungarian Kingdom.

149 An even superficial examination of the tax lists from the three counties is enough to prove the point.

150 MNL OL, DL 102 338: “quia sunt certi ex e(gregiis) d(ominacionibus) vestris qui eciam in isto comitatu Zagradiensi bona habent.”

Buda,<sup>151</sup> but also in January 1487, when, however, no general assembly is known to have taken place.

And the appearance of the Slavonian nobility, predominantly those from the county of Körös, in the king's presence was by no means restricted to solemn embassies delegated by the noble *universitas*. They regularly attended the assemblies held by the king or his plenipotentiaries. Sometimes the two were linked: in February 1492 it was for the important assembly of Buda that many of them travelled to the capital, where the peace treaty of Pressburg was ratified, the so-called "Slavonian articles" enacted, and the Slavonian and Croatian nobility confirmed the Habsburg succession in Hungary.<sup>152</sup> One and a half year earlier, in June 1490, it was again an assembly, namely the one convoked for the election of the new king, which attracted many of them to Buda, where some or all of them also proceeded in the interests of their noble community.<sup>153</sup> More generally, it seems that all the Slavonian counties regularly sent at least one or two envoys to the Hungarian diet, wherever it was held. Establishing the identity of the envoys is no easy matter, for they are extremely rarely if ever nominated in our sources. Yet identification is possible through different byways. For instance, we have the invitation sent by king Matthias in August 1468 to the nobility of Körös for the assembly to be held at Pressburg. During the assembly itself, two charters were issued in favour of Ladislas Hermanfi at Pressburg, which makes it highly probable that he was one of the two envoys sent by his native county. Using such concordances, I was able to identify eleven general assemblies where the participation of Hermanfi can be assured.<sup>154</sup> Unfortunately, none of his fellow noblemen can be followed with such details throughout his career; nevertheless, those who can be identified show that these envoys were regularly elected from the same group of persons who turn up as special delegates of the Slavonian noble *universitas*.

In the first years of the reign of Matthias, the Slavonian nobility, together with their Hungarian fellows, were regularly mobilised by the king.<sup>155</sup> Mass mobilisation ended after 1466, when the Ottoman threat decreased, and

151 MNL OL, DF 261 839: "nobilibus comitatus Crisiensis ad presentem congregacionem generalem prelatorum et baronum ac procerum et nobilium regni universorum confluentibus."

152 On this assembly, and the participation of Slavonian noblemen, see most recently Tibor Neumann, "Békekötés Pozsonyban – országgyűlés Budán. A Jagelló–Habsburg kapcsolatok egy fejezete (1490–1492). Második közlemény" [Peace Treaty at Pressburg – General Assembly at Buda. A Chapter in the History of Habsburg–Jagello Relationship. 2<sup>nd</sup> part], *Századok* 145 (2011): 309–24.

153 On this assembly see Kubinyi, "Két sorsdöntő esztendő," 18–22.

154 Pálosfalvi, "Greiben Hermanfi," II, 311–12.

155 Pálosfalvi, "Vitovec János," 449, 468. Mass mobilisation of the Slavonian nobility can also be surmised in May 1463: *ibid.*, 459–60. In the autumn of 1464 the envoys of the Slavonian nobility exposed to the king "nonnullas necessitates eiusdem regni nostri propter quas hac vice iuxta dispositionem Albe factam regnicole nostri contra Turcas exercituare non

May 1465	Ladislás Hermanfi, Nicholas Kasztellánfi
August 1467	provost Vítus Bocskai, Frank Fánecs
May 1474	Peter Bikszádi, Andrew Kapitánfi, John Vidfi of Korbova
October 1477	Nicholas Dombai, Ladislás Hermanfi and Peter Bikszádi
January 1487	Ladislás Hermanfi, Peter Bocskai, Michael Kerhen, Peter Gudovci, George Kapitánfi, Anthony Gereci, Nicholas Orros of Orrosov, Ladislás Simonfi of Miletinc, Nicholas Puneck of Puneckovc, [...] Prasnica
July 1488	Michael Kerhen, George Kapitánfi, Nicholas Orros of Orrosov
April 1489	Ladislás Hermanfi
June 1490	Ladislás Hermanfi, Paul Paksi, George Turóci, Stephen Dersfi, Peter Bocskai, Peter Gudovci, Bernard Rohfi, Nicholas Pekri, Gregory Sztubica
February–March 1492	Balthasar Battyányi, Peter Bocskai, Bernard Rohfi, Peter Pogány, Michael Kerhen, George Szencsei, Peter Gudovci, Christopher Šubić of Pernya, George Kasztellánfi, Nicholas Tulbert, Albert Lónyai, Nicholas Bocskai, Nicholas Herkfi, Emeric Hásságyi, John Mindszenti, Elias Bosnyák, Ladislás Sztubica, Ladislás Pekri, Nicholas Orros, George Orehovci, John Csersztveci, Peter Gereci, John Kernyak of Poljana, John Orehovci
March 1494	George Szencsei, George Kapitánfi
December 1496	Bernard Turóci, George Kapitánfi, Nicholas Vojkfi
February 1499	Bernard Turóci, Nicholas Vojkfi
October 1505	Emeric Hásságyi, George Kasztellánfi, Bernard Turóci, Elias Bosnyák
February 1517	Paul Nespesai
July 1524	Balthasar Batthyány, Nicholas Dersfi, Sigismund Pogány <sup>1</sup>

1 MNL OL, DF 268 083, DF 268 085, Kukuljević, *Iura regni*, part II, 211–12, 208–09, MNL OL, DF 268 110, DF 268 111, DF 268 108, DF 252 107; *Beiträge zur Geschichte Ungarns unter der Regierung der Könige Wladislaus II. und Ludwig II. 1490–1526*. Mitgetheilt von Friedrich Firnhaber, in *Archiv für Kunde österreichischer Geschichts-Quellen* III. Vienna, 1849, 513–15; Kukuljević, *Iura regni*, part II, 228–29, 234, 241, 254–59, 270, MNL OL, DL 102 338.

Matthias turned his attention westwards. This change of attitude influenced as a matter of fact the relationship between the king and the Slavonian nobility. Matthias needed money and trained soldiers thereafter, and favoured those social factors from whom he could get them without the risk of running into resistance. This policy is best illustrated by his role played in the conflict which opposed the Slavonian nobility to the bishop of Zagreb in the matter of

possent,” and offered instead to pay a higher tax. See Budapesti Egyetemi Könyvtár Kézirattár, Kaprinay Gyűjtemény (Collectio Kaprinayana), vol. LXIV, 568–69.

paying the tithe. The king, although making serious and unfeigned efforts at mediation between the two parties, as a rule took sides with the prelate, with one exception, which is all the more revealing. In January 1472, when bishop Oswald Tuz refused to send his troops for the royal campaign in northwestern Hungary, Matthias expressly prohibited the Slavonian nobility from letting their peasants pay the tithe.<sup>156</sup> But he reverted to his initial stance as soon as the prelate had submitted himself again to royal authority; this proves beyond doubt that he valued the bishop, who maintained his troops basically from his revenues from the tithe, more than a nobility unwilling either to fight or to pay instead. It is a sure indication of royal authority that the Slavonian nobility, with very few exceptions, remained faithful both in 1467, when they were afflicted by the royal reforms as harshly as their peers in Transylvania, and in 1471, when the leaders of the opposition were prelates of Slavonian origins.<sup>157</sup> Their attitude seems to have been exemplified by Ladislás Hermanfi, who was rewarded by Matthias in 1471 for having exhorted his fellow-nobles to remain faithful to the ruler.<sup>158</sup> Thirty years before, in 1441, Caspar Kasztellánfi was gratified in a similar way by Wladislaw I for having organised congregations throughout Slavonia, where the local nobility were offered an occasion to confirm their fidelity to the king.<sup>159</sup> In an inverse way, the case of Balthasar Batthyány, who was accused in 1491 of having tried to draw his Slavonian fellow noblemen to the camp of Maximilian of Habsburg,<sup>160</sup> and later acquitted of the charge and declared to have remained faithful throughout the crisis, also points in the same direction.

156 MNL OL, DF 268 092: "nullus omnino vestrum prefato episcopo Zagradiensi aut hominibus suis aliquas decimas et alios proventus qualescumque de bonis et possessionibus vestris [...] dare aut persolvere audeat."

157 According to András Kubinyi (*Mátyás király*, 64) the revolt of 1467 spilled over Slavonia as well; I have not found any information supporting this view. On the conspiracy of 1471 with a focus on its Slavonian prelate-leaders see András Kubinyi, "Vitéz János és Janus Pannonius politikája Mátyás uralkodása idején" [The Policies of John Vitéz and Janus Pannonius during the Reign of King Matthias], in István Bartók, László Jankovits and Gábor Kecskeméti eds., *Humanista műveltség Pannóniában* [Humanist Culture in Hungary] (Pécs: Művészetek Háza-Pécsi Tudományegyetem, 2000) 20–26. For the Slavonian rebels proscribed in 1481 see Tringli, "Szlavóniai közgyűlés," 314–17.

158 MNL OL, DL 100 816: "ipse siquidem notabilis nobilis regni nostri Sclavonie non solum solus paratus esse sed etiam alios inducere videtur ad exhibenda opera fidelitatis in honorem nostre regie dignitatis et corone."

159 MNL OL, DF 252 397: "tanquam vir animi constancia decorus fideliter nobis adherendo et constanter inter alios ipsam rem nostram dirigendo, adeo etiam apud nonnullos in illis partibus in fide nostra pusillanimitate vacillantes laudabiliter cum certis nostris fidelibus agendo, ut eos in nostram obedienciam convertit, in observandaque fidelitate solida roboracione reliquit."

160 MNL OL, DF 255 911: "talem fecisset dispositionem et conclusionem ut ipse serenissimo principi domino Maximiliano regi Romanorum obedire sibi que inservire aliosque nobiles regni Sclavonie alloqui vellet ut et ipsi cum eo circa ipsum Romanorum regem audire sibi que obedire et inservire deberent."

The situation changed again under Matthias' Jagiellonian successors, who were unable to maintain a standing army on the scale done by Matthias, and thus lacked the most important means of political pressure so skilfully applied by their predecessor. It is highly characteristic in this respect that Wladislaw II tried in vain to compel the Slavonian nobility to reassume their traditional obligation of personal military service again,<sup>161</sup> and, as said above, both he and his son, Louis II, suffered the humiliation of having to revoke their appointees to the banal office because of the resistance of the Slavonian nobility.<sup>162</sup> It is again surely not accidental that the period between 1490 and 1526 was decisive in the formation of the corporate identity of the latter, when the general assembly (*congregatio generalis*) of the Slavonian nobility became an almost permanent institution, and the prime means of communication with the ruler.<sup>163</sup> It should be emphasised, however, that there was no massive defection on the part of the Slavonian nobility either in 1491 to king Maximilian, or in 1498 to duke Corvin, or in 1508–1510 to the revolting ban, Andrew Both. And in August 1526 the Slavonian nobility appeared in the royal camp at Mohács as they had done more than sixty years before for the anti-Ottoman campaigns of king Matthias.<sup>164</sup>

Thus, the royal court remained a centre of political decision making and source of influence which, apparently, lost nothing of its importance right until 1526. The traditional role of those "notable nobles" such as Ladislás Hermanfi and Caspar Kasztellánfi seems to have been a kind of mediation between the king and the local nobility. Unfortunately, we still know very little about the ways in which the court functioned and how it was transformed between 1400 and 1526.<sup>165</sup> Thus the best way to approach the problem seems to examine the various forms of the interaction between court and nobility, of which representation at general assemblies or before the king was only one manifestation. Another, equally important was membership of the court itself, although it is one of the problems which are most difficult to examine, partly because no research concerning the later middle ages has been done on the scale undertaken by Pál Engel.

161 Kukuljević, *Iura regni*, part II, 245–46.

162 In fact, George Kanizsai was also appointed and then rejected as ban of Slavonia in 1498; yet in this case the revocation of the royal decision was caused not by the resistance of the Slavonian nobility but by the mere power and influence of duke Corvin south of the Drava. On the appointment and its revocation see MNL OL, DF 268 136.

163 This statement is based on my own collection with regard to the development of the Slavonian *congregatio generalis*, to which I intend to return in a separate article.

164 Kubinyi, "Mohácsi csata," 184–85, 189.

165 On the Jagiellonian period see András Kubinyi, "A királyi udvar élete a Jagelló-korban" [The Life of the Court in the Jagiellonian Period], in *Kelet és Nyugat között. Történeti tanulmányok Kristó Gyula tiszteletére* [Between East and West. Studies in Honour of Gyula Kristó], ed. László Koszta (Szeged: Szegedi Középkorász Műhely, 1995) 309–35. Modern inquiries into the working of the medieval Hungarian court are missing. For the types of changes in the later middle ages see Watts, *Making of Politics*, 407–09.

In the late Angevin period six among our families found their way to the royal court, and what is known about them confirms the picture envisaged by Pál Engel. Four of them belonged to the richest Slavonian families which had been living there for at least a hundred years then. The most "classical" career is that of Nicholas Pekri: the son of Paul, he joined the court in circumstances unknown to us sometime before the middle of the century. The grandson of ban Peter, still immensely rich, he belonged to that layer of the nobility for whom access to the court was more a question of personal determination than of chance. Although his career was restricted to the court of the queen, at that time baronial positions there apparently involved no less prestige than those in the royal court.<sup>166</sup> In the Fáncs family, three brothers joined successively, or simultaneously, we do not know, the court, one of whom, John, died during one of the Italian campaigns of Louis I. The Fáncs also belonged to the second rank of the aristocracy in the late Árpád age, as did the Grebeni, who likewise sent two brothers to the royal court. The office-holding of Paul Szencsei as deputy palatine represented a different pattern in that his access to the court was dependent upon the career of his lord, Nicholas Garai the elder. The remaining two to enter the royal court were master Latk of the Hrvatiníć family, and his cousin, master Gregory, brother of Nelipac, who, lords of the castle of Berstyanóc and that of Dobrakucsa respectively, belonged to the same social category as the other four. Another family, the Gorbonoki, joined them during the brief reign of Charles II: Ladislas, son of Stephen, seems to have joined the royal court as a *familiaris* of Stephen Lackfi; yet again, Ladislas belonged in terms of both descent and landed wealth to the top of the Slavonian nobility. The situation thus justifies the statement of Engel, according to which court career was then mostly dependent upon an initial amount of wealth, and was generally not open to the ranks of the poorer nobility.<sup>167</sup> That it could be lucrative, on the other hand, is proved by the success of the Grebeni in reobtaining their family castle and the expansion of the Fáncs lands in Somogy.

During the reign of Sigismund, at first the pattern seems to be the same, but important modifications took place in the 1420s and 1430s. We meet in the royal court the Fáncs, the Pekri and the Szencsei again, joined by such old Slavonian families as the Bikszádi, the Bocskai, the Csupor, the Ost of Herbortya and the Kasztellánfi, and by newly established ones like the Dersfi, the Dombai and the Rohonci. Two members of the Garázda family also joined the royal court, but, since in all probability both of them had by that time left Slavonia, and they did not return there later, their cases should perhaps be left out of consideration. Whereas in the case of the Pekri and the Szencsei their involvement in the revolt of 1403 cut the way before all further rise, for the

166 When there is a reginal court, its officeholders are recruited from the same circle as those of the royal court, at least up to the 1420s. Cf. Engel, *Archontológia*, vol. I, 54–61.

167 Engel, "Társadalom és politikai struktúra," 316.



Fáncs, for instance, the seeds sown in the Angevin period seem to have yielded fruits in the first years of the fifteenth century in the form of the baronial offices of Ladislas Fáncs. Yet, as we have already seen, neither Ladislas himself, nor Paul Csupor, nor Martin Ders, nor Nicholas Bocskai, nor John Ost were able to establish themselves and their families among the barons. The sons of Ladislas Fáncs remained members of the court, as did the two sons of Paul Csupor, as well as George Dombai and Martin Ders, and, as far as we know, they took part in important political and judicial decisions. The brother of ban Paul Csupor was even a baronial member of the queen's court, although after 1423 its personnel was far less illustrious than before 1419.<sup>168</sup> They in a sense belonged to the "outer" circle of royal government, albeit not quite in the way it had been normal in the Angevin period. It is in this respect highly characteristic that George Bocskai, for instance, having been a member of the court in the years around 1400, disappeared from it completely and lived in provincial obscurity for several decades. The same is true of George Dombai, who is last referred to as participating in a governmental decision in 1416, and consequently disappears almost completely from our sight, although he was still alive in 1439. Or George Bikszádi, who returned from the court to the service of the Tallóci and became first ispán and then viceban in Slavonia. Of course, purely personal decisions may have underlain such changes, yet the impression is that the importance attributed to membership of the king's or queen's court as a source of influence and advancement had decreased; the prestigious, yet minor favours that could be obtained apparently did not presuppose a constant personal stay there. An interesting and apparently anomalous occasion was the Roman coronation of Sigismund, when, however, it may have been the favours available in the papal court which accounted for the presence of an important number of Slavonian noblemen, many of whom are referred to as members of the court on this occasion only.<sup>169</sup>

Yet in the second part of Sigismund's reign we see some important changes in the functioning of the court, which had been examined by Elemér Mályusz but received no attention since.<sup>170</sup> Mályusz himself applied to these changes the term "centralization," the most important element of which was the emergence around the ruler himself of a group of persons who had risen to prominence thanks to their legal knowledge and administrative expertise.

168 Engel, *Királyi hatalom*, 77–78. I do not count here Paul Turóci, for he was member of the queen's court before the settlement of the family in Slavonia.

169 See Csukovits, "Nagy utazás," where the Hungarian entourage of Sigismund is examined. In fact, it is open to doubt to what extent the members of Sigismund's entourage in 1433, and the participants of the 1402 assembly for that matter, can be regarded as members of the court in the traditional sense. Pál Engel counted them as such; I am not entirely convinced.

170 Elemér Mályusz, "Zsigmond király központosítási törekvései Magyarországon" [The Efforts of King Sigismund at Centralisation in Hungary], in idem, *Klió szolgálatában. Válogatott tanulmányok* [In the Service of Clio. Selected Studies], ed. István Soós (Budapest: MTA Történettudományi Intézete, 2003), 177–205.

Three persons from the county of Körös can be regarded as belonging to this intimate circle of advisers: Michael Raveni, John Megyericsei and Nicholas (Szerecsen) Gereci. The case of the latter is the simplest; as we have seen, thanks to his long Ottoman captivity, he had built up such an extensive knowledge of oriental affairs which made him an indispensable tool in diplomatic negotiations. He was consequently rewarded with the estate of Kristallóc in Körös, thus being the only non-baronial supporter of Sigismund to get such an important grant there. One is in a much more difficult situation in trying to assess the role of people like Raveni and Megyericsei. On the face of it, their function in the government can be fairly well grasped: master Michael represented his king as royal attorney in matters of great importance, sometimes together with Stephen Aranyi, one of the key figures of the government in the 1430s. Yet it seems that there had developed around Sigismund a group of intimate collaborators of non-baronial status who played a much bigger role in directing political affairs than is generally supposed. A letter written by John Megyericsei sometime in the early 1430s, at any case during the absence of Sigismund, shows him occupied in matters entrusted to him by the king, unfortunately undetailed in the letter;<sup>171</sup> but the fact that he settled a case between Ladislás Hagymás, the addressee of the letter, and the son of the Ottoman emperor,<sup>172</sup> as well as his obtaining a letter of prorogation directly from the deputy chancellor, shows him a person of considerable influence. Another letter from the same period, written by a man of similar social standing, namely John Rudai from the county of Temes, to the same Ladislás Hagymás, then ban of Szörény, is worth comparing from this point of view. Rudai had personal access to the emperor, had firsthand knowledge of planned appointments to important posts, and even of military operations considered in the court and the planned itinerary of the imperial couple, which are not known from other sources.<sup>173</sup> Both he and Megyericsei called Ladislás Hagymás their lord, yet it is evident that they were closer to the most important centre of decision making than Hagymás himself, who held one of the key frontier posts, and were even in a position to be able to influence directly the process of decision making. Since neither Megyericsei, nor Raveni, nor Rudai are known to have received important donations, it is highly probable that they were allotted some kind of salary which, however, was surely not enough to enhance their social position at home. Their stance in the court seems nevertheless to represent something radically new with regard to the somewhat archaic structures of the Angevin kingdom.

In the twenty years which followed the death of Sigismund the structures of government elaborated by the king-emperor disintegrated and later

171 MNL OL, DL 48 160: "iam expeditis omnibus factis regalibus ad dominum regem transeundi sum positus in itinere."

172 Ibidem: "factum vestrum cum filio imperatoris Turcorum disposui."

173 MNL OL, DL 44 053.

reemerged completely transformed. Between 1440 and 1444 the almost constant civil war impeded the functioning of royal government, especially because both the magnates and the nobility, at least its richer members, had plenty of room for navigating between the competing pretenders and their representatives.<sup>174</sup> However, as the example of Frank Pekri, the only known Slavonian member of the entourage of queen Elizabeth, shows, it could be extremely dangerous to put in someone's lots too overtly with either of the pretenders. As for John Hunyadi, who governed the kingdom of Hungary in the name of young Ladislas V from June 1446 until January 1453, he did not even have a court of his own.<sup>175</sup> Although after 1453 some kind of royal court was reorganised together with the chancelleries and the royal tribunals, Ladislas V did not have the time to establish a circle of confidential advisors in the manner of his grandfather, and his court remained dominated by magnates, before all by Ulrich of Cilli, who in fact governed in his name. This anomalous situation certainly reflected itself in the relationship between the nobility and the court.

Wladislaw I, in fact, who was elected as king of Hungary in March 1440, and arrived there as an unknown foreigner, had no option but to rely on the magnate families elevated by Sigismund and further enriched by Albert of Habsburg, and his efforts at reaching the lower layers of the nobility seem to have been restricted to holding general assemblies, and were anyway cut short by his untimely death at Varna in November 1444. His "successor," governor John Hunyadi, lacked both the means and respect to attract noble followers to his entourage, which appears to have consisted of persons originating from the territories under his personal domination. Consequently, with one exception, we find no Slavonian noblemen among them, which is not surprising in view of the almost unlimited domination of the counts of Cilli in the province. The exception is Akacius Csupor, who turns up as Hunyadi's "janitor" in 1448, and whose brother, George, had been his deputy in Transylvania before. The Csupor brothers had been the chief supporters of the Tallóci in Slavonia before 1445, who had even gone as far as to bully the chapter of Zagreb into electing Demetrius as bishop; they consequently had no other option than to join Hunyadi and even leave Slavonia for some time. If we take into consideration that Hunyadi may even have served Sigismund together with Akacius Csupor in an early phase of his career, their decision to

174 Tamás Pálosfalvi, "A Rozgonyiak és a polgárháború (1440–1444)" [The Rozgonyi Family and the Civil War], *Századok* 137 (2003): 897–928.

175 Some of the court dignities remained as a matter of fact unfilled, and neither do we find references to members of the *curia/aula*. The governor had an entourage of his own, but it merely differed from those of other magnates in its numbers. Cf. Engel, *Archontológia*, vol. I. 45, 48, 509.

remain close to Hunyadi can be said to have been reasonable and, moreover, paid off abundantly a generation later.<sup>176</sup>

Between 1453 and 1457 four noblemen from Körös turn up in the court of Ladislas V, but only two among them can be regarded as real newcomers: Christoph Paschingar, a foreign *familiaris* of the counts of Cilli, and Albert Pataki, presumably also a protégé of count Ulrich. Benedict Turóci could also thank his access to the court to the support of his lord, Ulrich of Cilli, and even began his baronial career there; yet in a sense he merely returned to the court, for a generation before his father and uncle had belonged to the “non-baronial” entourage of queen Barbara. The same is true of Frank Fáncs, who seems to have been a follower of palatine Ladislas Garai, another influential magnate in the court of Ladislas V: his kinsmen had been present in the court of Sigismund for two generations by then. We know nothing about the functions of these court knights in the 1450s, for it is in connection with royal grants made in favour of them that they come before our eyes; yet in view of the fact that they belonged to the intimate supporters of the magnates who dominated the court of Ladislas V it is highly improbable that they could have acted as independent agents for executing the royal will. This, the increased role of magnate service as a means of reaching the royal court, seems to have been an important transformation with regard to the Angevin period.

King Matthias is generally held to have followed the example of Sigismund in framing the structures of his policy.<sup>177</sup> Yet if we look closely at the example of the nobility of Körös, quite different patterns emerge. Nicholas Csupor performed a social rise which stands unparalleled in Slavonia for the whole period examined in this book. His access to the court was evidently due to the services which his father and uncle had done to John Hunyadi, yet his further rise appears rather to have been the fruit of his military talents. He is the only Slavonian nobleman to have received immense landed wealth from the king, albeit not in his native province, and his offspring would surely have entered definitively the baronage had he not died prematurely. That his case was exceptional becomes evident if compared to those of Ladislas Hermanfi and Peter Bocskai. Hermanfi turns up together with Csupor as deputy master of the horse, that is, he also belonged to the court, but failed, or was unwilling, to pursue a similar career there. Since, as we have seen above, he remained in close contact with his ruler through different channels, this surely was not a sign of disgrace. The example of Peter Bocskai is revealing from another aspect. In 1476 he was very close to becoming a baron, yet the king opted for a non-Slavonian, Ladislas Egervári, whose material wealth was certainly not greater than that of Bocskai before he received the estate of Velike from his ruler.<sup>178</sup> In this case the ruler’s apparent

176 Pál Engel, “Hunyadi pályakezdése” [The Beginnings of the Career of John Hunyadi], in idem, *Honor, vár, ispánság*, 516–17.

177 Engel, *Realm of Saint Stephen*, 317.

178 On the Egervári lands see Csánki, *Történeti földrajz*, vol. II, 820.

reluctance to appoint as ban of Slavonia a local person with deep-rooted social connections there may have been accompanied by other considerations which remain hidden to us. It is certainly remarkable in this respect, however, that Nicholas Csupor was appointed voivode of Transylvania, and thus physically removed from both Slavonia and the court, a strategy that seems to have been consciously pursued by Matthias after his authority had been consolidated.<sup>179</sup> The example of Martin Gereci could also be cited in this context: as mentioned above, he turns up once, in 1469, as a royal *familiaris*, receiving a minor grant from the king. But he disappears from our sources thereafter, which means that he may have perished in one of the subsequent royal campaigns, and therefore his case is not necessarily appropriate to prove the point.

It may seem surprising that Benedict Turóci, one of the leading supporters of the Cilli family, who had started his baronial career under Ladislas V, continued to rise in influence after the accession of Matthias, and also his brother, Ladislas served for some time as a royal castellan. His baronial career may have been a deliberate measure on the king's part to counterbalance the overwhelming influence of John Vitovec in Slavonia in the early 1460s, and it is in this respect certainly not accidental that when his son, George, returned as a baron in the 1470s, it was in a position without real governmental authority. The brief baronial career of Nicholas Dombai should apparently be seen in the same light as that of Benedict Turóci: a leading *familiaris* of Nicholas Újlaki, he must have simultaneously been a means of control of, and communication with, his former lord in the first critical years of Matthias' reign. These careers thus represent a pattern of policy applied by the king in a situation in which his freedom of action was seriously limited first by his dubious legitimacy, and later by the constant Ottoman menace.

Things changed radically from the 1470s. Alongside raising a handful of people "from the dust" to wealth on a scale which had been unknown since the early years of Sigismund,<sup>180</sup> he also formed a wider group of persons of medium wealth upon whom the execution of his policies was increasingly based. Such persons belonged to his *aula*, and held important counties or castles, sometimes more than one, or carried out equally important domestic and diplomatic missions.<sup>181</sup> Four persons in our sample belonged to this category: Balthasar Batthyány, Peter Pogány,<sup>182</sup> Albert Lónyai and Michael

179 On the relationship between king Matthias and the barons, see Kubinyi, "Bárók a királyi tanácsban," esp. 177–79, and *passim*.

180 The most evident examples being, alongside the king's own distant relatives such as the Pongrác of Dengeleg and the Geréb of Vingárt, Blaise Magyar, Paul Kinizsi and, of course, the Szapolyai brothers.

181 On this group see András Kubinyi, "Mátyás-kori államszervezet," 66–69.

182 I do not count here the cousins of Peter, for although they are expressly mentioned as staying in royal service, they were subjected partly to Peter himself and partly to others and are thus not to be reckoned as belonging immediately to the court.

Tompa. How these persons were chosen and how they grew in influence is impossible to tell: we have seen that the father-in-law of Batthyány, Ladislás Hermanfi, was in close contact with the court throughout the 1460s and 1470s, and one of the cousins of Peter Pogány worked as a notary in the chancery. Batthyány and Pogány appear to have been predominantly soldiers, whereas Lónyai took on "foreign affairs," as is proved by his subsequent career. Consequently, they did not constantly stay in the king's entourage, and Lónyai, for instance, was convoked in 1489 by Matthias to Vienna from his home in the county of Körös. All of them were fairly rich already at the time of their joining the court, and in this respect the exception is certainly Michael Tompa.

A person of considerably lesser status and wealth, it is almost certain that his access to the court was due to some kind of lordly support, and was certainly not unrelated to the canonries held by his kinsman, Thomas, in the churches of Zagreb and Esztergom. Yet the deferential tone used by viceban Andrew Kapitánfi towards him shows that he partook of the royal authority in the same way as did his richer colleagues. The examples of Akacius Kasztellánfi and George Pataki, on the other hand, clearly belong to another category, in so far as their employment in the border defence, although involving immediate royal service, did not imply any regular contact with the court itself.

It is uncertain what the status of Stephen Dersfi and the Dombai brothers was as court *familiars*, and whether they should be regarded as belonging to the same administrative group as the persons listed above. Since they turn up as such on a single occasion, it appears as if their role should be interpreted in a different way.

We have seen above that in the last years of Matthias' reign, some at least among the Slavonian nobility, such as Balthasar Batthyány, Stephen Csupor and Ladislás Szencsei, received a salary from the royal treasury for the equipment of a certain number of cavalry. It is highly probable that these persons were required to follow the king for his military expeditions, and, since Stephen Dersfi appears as a court *familiaris* precisely on the aftermath of the siege of Sabać, he may have done so for the Sabać campaign. In so far as these persons were payed by the treasury, and were apparently regarded as belonging to the court, while they continued to stay at home, they anticipate a model which became increasingly dominant in the Jagiellonian period.

Yet before we leave the reign of Matthias, another phenomenon should be mentioned. It concerns the office of deputy-palatine held by Ladislás Hermanfi from 1486.

This office, which was preceded by his holding two similar offices as deputy master of the horse and deputy *magister tavarnicorum* in the 1460s and 1470s respectively, involved no practical authority, neither at the palatinal court, nor in the county of Pest nominally headed by the deputy-palatine,



and, moreover, it apparently yielded no revenues.<sup>183</sup> What, then, was the reason for assuming it? It seems very probable that it was the prestige that the office itself provided locally. In the case of Ladislás Hermanfi the increase of his prestige among the Slavonian nobility is evident, even if he was apparently not obliged to stay continuously in the capital. Yet such an office of high prestige but low responsibility was only available for the very top layer of the provincial nobility, and even in the case of Ladislás Hermanfi was preceded by two decades of repeated appearances at court and the establishment of fruitful relations there. It is thus surely not accidental that his stepson, Balthasar Batthyány, also emerged in a similar position, as deputy judge royal, in the very last years of his life; interestingly enough, his own son, Francis, had already assumed a baronial office then.

After the death of king Matthias, as the conditions of exerting royal power changed, new patterns of contact between court and nobility emerged, some of which were at least the result of the growing sophistication of royal government. First of all, the group of confidential agents upon whose military talents the aggressive policies of Matthias were based in the last decade of his rule was dissolved or transformed. After 1490, with the dispersal of the standing mercenary army and the growing Ottoman pressure, expansion gave place to defence, which required a different governmental organisation. It is in this respect characteristic that Balthasar Batthyány, although still regarded as an *aulicus*, continued his career as twice ban of Jajce, and two among his colleagues in the office, Stephen Gorbónoki and Balthasar Alapi, also turn up as *aulici*. The son of Stephen Dersfi returned as royally appointed captain of Slavonia. As for Elias Bosnyák, he was also member of the court, but he served continuously as *provisor* of Jajce and controlled other neighbouring fortifications. Peter Pogány continued his royal service as ispán of Pozsony, but it is in matters of an administrative rather than military character that his activity can be grasped, and it was likewise in an office of administrative importance, as master of the court, that he finished his life. Very interestingly, Michael Tompa, the poorest among those whom we find in immediate royal service in the 1480s, is not referred to as an *aulicus* any more, although he continued to enjoy considerable respect in Slavonia, as his emergence there as tax collector proves. In the case of Francis Pan of Kravarina, on the other hand, we do not know what his royal service consisted in, but it clearly shows that it was greatly valued, even if it is uncertain whether on account of the revenues it yielded or simply because of the prestige it involved.

As the example of Elias Bosnyák shows, and especially his confiscation of the lands of George Szencsei, and his governing the royal castle of Atyina, *aulici* from Slavonia in the first half of the Jagiellonian period could still discharge *ad hoc* administrative duties in the manner it had been usual under

183 On the position of the deputy palatine with regard to the county of Pest see Tringli, "Pest megye," 154–56.

Matthias. Indeed, the old pattern of service, which manifested itself in a fairly close attachment to the royal court, seems to have survived, as the examples of Ambrose Kecer and Sigismund Pogány show. Yet most of those who turn up with regard to the court in the 1510s and especially in the 1520s, were but nominally connected to the court,<sup>184</sup> and in fact served continuously in the southern marches of the realm. Balthasar Alapi had been captain of the royal light cavalry in Croatia before becoming ban of Jajce, and in 1520 he again seems to have stayed on the southern frontier and received money from the Slavonian tax upon royal orders. John Kasztellánfi is known to have taken part in the Ottoman campaigns of 1524 and 1525, whereas Louis Pekri junior was captain of Slavonia in 1525, and John Szencsei was also paid as part of the royal light cavalry in 1525. It was thus merely in terms of pay that these persons belonged to the royal court, and it was apparently the repeated difficulties of maintaining royal control over the banate of Croatia and Slavonia which made necessary such an organisation. To what extent the salaries of those serving along the southern borders were regularly paid from the royal treasury is another problem, of course.<sup>185</sup>

From 1498 on the nobility was accorded the right to elect from their ranks *assessores* who would have a seat both in the central courts and on the royal council. The social and political implications of this measure were extensively examined by the late András Kubinyi, who stated that the persons elected into this group can be regarded in a sense as the political leaders of the nobility.<sup>186</sup> For reasons related to the judicial organisation, the Slavonian counties elected no *assessores*; yet we do find among them noblemen from the county of Körös, for those who had possessions in Hungarian counties were liable for election on account of their non-Slavonian lands. Thus, Balthasar Batthyány and Paul Čavlović were elected from the county of Fejér, George Kerecsényi and Sigismund Pogány from that of Zala. The elected *assessores* could take part in important political decisions and discharged equally important diplomatic missions, yet the institution, as already remarked by Kubinyi,<sup>187</sup> cannot be regarded as a decisive step towards the baronage: although the son of

184 Cf. the apparently parallel development of the extended French royal council in the fifteenth century, most of the members of which "rarely came into contact with the king, and were more like retainers than councillors, but there seems little doubt that the great network to which they belonged was an important means of representing aristocratic and provincial opinion." Watts, *The Making of Politics*, 403.

185 An illustration of how the system worked in practice is provided by the appointment of Balthasar Batthyány as chamberlain (*cubicularius*) in 1520. He was contracted for the equipment of fifty horsemen, in return for which he was allotted a salary of 1300 florins p. a. For the periods of service outside the court he was entitled to a monthly pay amounting to as much as that received by others serving "in the manner of hussars" (*more huzaronico*). In order to get the money due to him, Balthasar was empowered to collect for his own account all the royal taxes to be levied in Slavonia from his lands there. Cf. MNL OL, DL 101 824.

186 Kubinyi, "Köznemesi ülnökök," 262.

187 *Ibid.*, 266.

Balthasar Batthyányi did finish up as master of the cupbearers and later ban of Slavonia, none of the remaining three or their descendants achieved the same. Sigismund Pogány was later court *familiaris*, Paul Čavlović royal councillor, whereas the son of George Kerecsényi became the deputy of ban John of Corbavia. On the other hand, the other person to ascend the baronage from among the nobility of Körös in the period of Louis II, namely John Tahi, apparently never belonged to the court in any form before his appointment as ban of Slavonia.<sup>188</sup> This surely played no part in his failure to assert his authority in Slavonia, for, as we have seen, Francis Batthyány faced the same problem after his appointment of ban.

One more institution, that of the royal secretaries, should be briefly addressed yet, which is represented in our sample by John Megyericsei. Royal secretaries played an ever increasing role in the government during the Jagiellonian period, discharging diplomatic missions, and, at least some of them, having access to sessions of the royal council.<sup>189</sup> Their role in this respect was analogous to that of the “experts” whom we had met in the court of Sigismund. Yet, besides the fact that we know nothing about the activities of John Megyericsei as a royal secretary, it was in fact not as a Slavonian nobleman that he joined the court: he had left his native county at an early age in the service of bishop Ladislás Geréb, and became a canon in Transylvania. Two decades later it was again a prelate, Francis Várdai, bishop of Transylvania, who helped him to become royal secretary, a post which he only held for a brief period before his death in 1517.

What is worth emphasising is that court service in the “traditional” sense of the word, that is, with the exclusion of non-governmental activities in the chanceries and the central judicial courts, was and remained throughout characteristic of the “top group within the top group”. With very few exceptions this kind of attachment to the court was the privilege of those families whose members regularly received the *egregius* title and/or possessed more fortifications, and we find among them all the families which obtained baronial posts in the period between 1400 and 1526. In these families it was quite normal for court service to be inherited from generation to generation (Bocskai, Csupor, Dersfi, Dombai, Grebeni/Batthyány, Kasztellánfi, Kecser, Kerecsényi). Indeed, in one unique case, that of the Grebeni–Batthyány, the arch of courtly service links as many as five generations from Lorand Grebeni to Balthasar and Francis Batthyány; this, again, is a further element to consider in the definitive rise of the Batthyány to the baronial élite. Alongside title, local officeholding (vicebans and tax-collectors) and the possession of fortifications, attachment to the court through service can thus be identified as one of the

<sup>188</sup> This, again, can be no more than an illusion created by the sources, however.

<sup>189</sup> András Kubinyi, “A királyi titkárok II. Lajos király uralkodása idejében” [The Royal Secretaries during the Reign of King Louis II], *Gesta. Miskolci történetész folyóirat* VI (2006): 1, 3–22.

major features of that group within the leading nobility which in a sense occupied an intermediate position between the barons and the lower ranks of the wealthy nobility, although it was more closely linked to the latter than to the former. The analysis of marriages will soon confirm this picture.

One final remark should be made. We have seen above that, apart from periods of profound political crisis, such as that of 1403, royal power played a very limited role in the local distribution of landed wealth. This is not to say, however, that the royal favour was not looked for. Throughout the whole period we have instances of minor royal donations in favour of Slavonian noblemen, a sure sign that the latter appreciated having access to the source of royal patronage. In most cases these grants consisted of no more than tiny parcels of land and, even more frequently, merely confirmed possessions already owned. Although sometimes they were justified by services specified in the charter of donation itself, more frequently they alluded only vaguely to the merits of the recipients. Other grants, such as permissions to exact tolls or construct a bridge on one's possessions, may have been more lucrative, but in material terms they certainly did not add considerably to the existing wealth of those who received them. The same is true of royal licenses to erect a fortification, especially as those who got it generally had one already at the time of petitioning the favour itself. These acts of royal favour, then, seem to have been principally asked to demonstrate the petitioner's closeness to court, and thus to augment his prestige locally. From the king's point of view such grants were an easy and cheap means of confirming the political ties which traditionally linked the nobility to the crown, and helped to maintain direct contact even in times of crisis. This kind of mutual interest seems to have been one of the pillars of late medieval political society.<sup>190</sup>

As for more considerable royal grants, which involved important material gains and not merely the symbolic demonstration of royal grace, accession to the king was much more difficult and petitioners had to overcome the opposition of rival claimants. The case of George Turóci is worth citing here: although the king praised the many services he had performed in the mastership of the cupbearers "to the honour of the royal dignity," it was apparently only the prefection of his spouse, Christine Csornai, that he was able to obtain from the king as a sign of his grace.<sup>191</sup> In this respect, the example of the Batthyány, the only one to be sufficiently documented, is more revelative, however. Both Balthasar Batthyány the elder and his two surviving sons, Francis and Balthasar the younger stayed very close to the royal court from

190 "Ideally, but surely also in typical practice, there was a personal link between everyone who exercised significant local lordship and the king. It was through links of this kind that the myriad and conflicting individual interests which went to make up an effective common interest, were satisfied." John Watts, *Henry VI and the Politics of Kingship* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 79.

191 MNL OL, DL 100 876: "in hoc suo honorabili pincernatus officio ad nostre regie dignitatis honorem."

the last decade of Matthias' rule until 1526; indeed, Francis was even brought up together with young Louis II. Yet if we have a look at the series of donations they received, and at the effectiveness with which they were followed up, the emerging picture is rather negative. The first donation that Balthasar received from Matthias was the portion of Andrew Kapitánfi in the estate of Desnice, and although he managed to take it by force, and also underpinned his rights by a treaty of mutual inheritance, he had a lot of trouble both with the surviving Kapitánfi and other petitioners who turned up successively with royal letters of donation. A year later he received together with Nicholas Bánfi the lands of the Sárkány family with the *castellum* of Buzádszigete in the county of Zala, confiscated for infidelity, and, while they managed to carry out a formal introduction, it seems that they eventually failed to seize them.<sup>192</sup> In 1492, as we have seen above, it was the inheritance of Gabriel Stefekfi, with another *castellum*, in the county of Körös, which was donated by Wladislaw II to Balthasar Batthyány and Peter Butkai, yet it took more than a decade, and a new royal donation for the former to overcome the resistance of rival forces, the greatest among which was surely Bartholomew Beriszló, prior of Vrana. All these grants concerned considerable landed wealth, yet by no means comparable with what the Batthyány already possessed. It was different with the huge estate of Fejérkő, with two castles, those of Fejérkő itself and of Újvár, the possession of which would surely have raised the Batthyány to a level comparable to that occupied by neighbouring magnates such as the Bánfi or the Ernuszt. The two castles had been inherited by John Bánfi with the hands of the widow of Francis Beriszló, and then arbitrarily taken from him by Peter Beriszló, ban of Slavonia.<sup>193</sup> After the latter's death in 1520, it was Francis Batthyány who upon royal orders redeemed the castles from the men of the late ban. Although the official view was apparently that the castles and their appurtenances should be regarded as having defaulted to the crown, king Louis at first ordered that they should be restored to Bánfi. Later on, however, he changed his mind, and in April 1521 he promised them to Francis Batthyány, and even ordered the castellans to hand over the fortifications to the grantee.<sup>194</sup> Francis immediately urged his brother Balthasar to proceed to the occupation, and even sent to him his own *familiares* to be appointed as castellans. In his letter to his brother, Francis advised him to act with the utmost prudence, for he had enemies at the court, before all the palatine, who opposed to the castles' being donated to Batthyány.<sup>195</sup> And the palatine, Stephen Bátori, seems indeed

192 MNL OL, DL 18 850. The estate is later attested in the hands of the Sárkány family.

193 MNL OL, DL 34 188. In 1515 the estates of Francis Beriszló had been donated by Wladislaw II to his heir, the future Louis II: DL 31 006.

194 MNL OL, DL 104 403: the king "castra Feyerkeu et Wywar [...] nobis et manibus nostris dare voluit et coram ore proprio regia maiestatis castellanis istorum castrorum prescriptorum commisit ut ipsa castra nobis et manibus nostris dare et assignare deberent."

195 Ibidem: "dominus palatinus eciam dicta castra quod nobis et manibus nostris regia maiestas dedit non libenter voluit."

to have prevailed, for some weeks later the case took another turn, this time in favour of John Bánfi, who was again authorised to retain Fejérkő.<sup>196</sup> Although Francis Batthyány kept his hopes alive for some time,<sup>197</sup> in the end he had to give in. And not only in the case of Fejérkő: he also provided for a royal grant concerning the inheritance of Andrew Henning, but his efforts again shipwrecked on the opposition of palatine Bátori.<sup>198</sup> Three years later, Batthyány eventually succeeded, when he received the estate of Némétújvár; by that time he had been a baron for almost ten years, and the family close to the court for almost forty. Things have moved a long way from the stormy career of Nicholas Csupor in the early 1470s.

### 3.5. MARRIAGE PATTERNS

We have already seen the importance of marriage alliances as a means of land acquisition and geographical mobility; now it is time to examine whether they can be used to refine the patterns of internal classification within the highest ranks of the nobility established on the basis of wealth, service and title. The task is again made difficult by the haphazard survival of the sources, as a result of which in some cases we can reconstruct whole networks of marriage alliances, but in others we have only bits and pieces of information,<sup>199</sup> upon which it is very difficult to base solid conclusions. Again, in the case of families/persons whose career in Slavonia extended to no more than a single generation, it is strictly impossible to establish long-term patterns. Altogether, however, the evidence is considerable enough for some interesting observations to be made, which could later be compared to similar analyses based on the material from other regions. The present investigation is not intended to be a thorough anthropological examination of noble marriages, of course; its basic aim is to identify some important links between wealth, status and marriage, and to find out to what extent the marriage alliances of a given family reflect changes in one or both of the first two aspects of their social history. For the sake of convenience, I analyse separately the two groups

196 MNL OL, DL 104 405.

197 MNL OL, DL 104 406. Even after the king had expressly ordered Batthyány to restore the estates, the widow of John Bánfi had to complain that "*huc usque predictus dominus Bothyany facere minime voluit*," and turned to Andrew Bátori for help: DL 94 390.

198 MNL OL, DL 104 406: "*Ex parte autem bonorum quondam domini Henyng hoc scribere possumus, quod regia maiestas nobis dedit sed nos nunc cum domino palatino non sumus bene concordēs.*"

199 Or no information at all, as in the case of the Mindszenti, Orros of Orrosovci or Fodorovci families, for instance.



characterised by the regular and occasional attribution of the *egregius* title. Not surprisingly, data for the second group is much more sparse, in some cases practically nonexistent.

As for the first group, one pattern, which one could perhaps term “normal” in the sense that it is fairly stable for a relatively long time, is provided by the Bocskai family. In the period between 1400 and 1526 for more than half of the known members of the family do we have information on the identity of the consort, and daughters are uncommonly well represented in our sample.<sup>200</sup> Upon examination of their case, the pattern which clearly emerges is that, despite obvious differences, all the families with whom the Bocskai came into contact by marriage during this long period belonged to the same social stratum as themselves, that is, the one titled regularly *magister* and then *egregius*. There is no divergence from this pattern either downwards or upwards. What is most interesting is that in the third generation both the two Ladislás and in the next one, Margaret, daughter of Ladislás, married from distant Hungarian families with no connection to Slavonia; both Margaret Csire and Catherine Csornai descended from old and illustrious kindreds (the Ákos and the Osli respectively), although none of them belonged to the aristocracy any more. As for the Vince of Szentgyörgy, albeit their immediate ancestor was but a burgher of Fehérvár, by the time they married from the Bocskai family they had already risen to the ranks of the rich nobility through their service in the financial administration.<sup>201</sup> Ladislás’s father George was member of the royal court, whereas in the case of Stephen, father of the other Ladislás, this can only be suspected; nevertheless, these marriages probably still reflect the wider horizons of the “court” nobility during the reign of Sigismund. Thereafter, that is, in the next two generations, consorts were chosen from Slavonian families or from those with strong social connections there, or, at least in the case of the three daughters of Stephen Apaj, from the counties bordering upon Slavonia from the north. The only exception is Anthony Sitkei, from the county of Vas, but his family was also closely connected to Zala and Anthony himself had possessions there.

Most of the families belonging to the regularly *egregius* group, and for which we have sufficient amount of evidence (Pekri,<sup>202</sup> Fánecs, Nelepec, Szencsei, Rohfi, Gorbonoki, Tulbert, Bikszádi, Kerecsényi, Kecser, Rohonci, Hásságyi) reflect the same pattern: consorts were normally chosen from local or non-Slavonian families of roughly the same landed wealth and social prestige. To this group can be added, in the absence of any better solution, those persons/families in the case of which only one (or at best two) marriage

200 The reader is kindly asked to refer to the genealogical table in the annex for detailed information.

201 Erik Fügedi, “A Szentgyörgyi Vince család” [The Szentgyörgyi Vince Family], *A Veszprém megyei múzeumok közleményei* 11 (1972): 261–69.

202 Of course, the three consecutive marriages of Susan Pekri, which clearly show a downward trend, make an exception, but do not profoundly alter the general picture.

partner can be identified (Bosnyák, Lónyai, Pozsegai, Paschingar, Piers, Tahi) This is no matter for surprise, of course; the same phenomenon was registered by Erik Fügedi upon the example of the Elefánthy family in the county of Nyitra.<sup>203</sup> Moreover, these long-term marriage trends were at least to a certain extent immune to changes which affected temporarily the social or material position of a given family member or branch. Here again, however, exceptions to the rule are much more significant and tell us more about the working of noble society than any number of "routine" cases.

The first case in point is that of the Kapitánfi family. Although our evidence is far from complete, it seems that the consorts chosen by members of the family until the end of the fifteenth century fit in well with the pattern outlined above. In the early sixteenth century, however, the picture changes. Unfortunately, among the male members of the last two generations only the wife of Sylvester, son of Stephen Kapitánfi is known, namely Catherine Bevenyöd, who belonged to a wealthy noble family from the county of Zagreb, apparently even richer than the Kapitánfi themselves. Yet the three daughters of Stephen Kapitánfi, himself always titled *egregius*, all married persons who came from families of an evidently inferior social status and were accordingly called simply *nobilis*. In the case of Peter Simonfi of Tapolcaszentgyörgy and Ladislás Becsevölgyi of Szentiván this is beyond doubt, for none of them is ever titled *egregius*; but also Michael Dombai, from the Győr kindred, belonged to that branch of the Dombai family which was much poorer than the other which played such a prominent role in Slavonia. Although it may be hazardous to conclude from such meagre evidence, it seems as if the fall of Andrew Kapitánfi and the loss of much of the family property to the Batthyány first reflected itself in the social status of the marriage partners the Kapitánfi were able to find for their female kin.

The reverse example is offered by the Gudovci. Rapid enrichment within one generation could, albeit not frequently, produce the social prestige needed to contract marriage alliances with families of an uncomparably more illustrious past. From this respect the fact that Peter Gudovci betrothed his son with Potenciana Bocskai is not really relevant, for, as we have seen, this marriage, although evidently a sign of prestige, was before all destined to counterbalance the pressure exerted by Thomas Bakóc in order to gather in the Gudovci inheritance. Yet Francis Dombai and Peter Megyericsi as consorts for the Gudovci daughters, joined by John Pekri in the next generation, as well as Barbara Kacor of Lak as the wife of Stephen Gudovci, are together the sign of a very rapid social rise. Although not as spectacular, a similar phenomenon can be observed with regard to most of the other successful social climbers: Michael Tompa (Christine Garázda), Nicholas Vojkfi (Justine Batthyány?), Stephen Prasovci (the sister of a Croatian viceban) and Balthasar

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203 Fügedi, *Elefánthyak*, 143.

Hobetić (Catherine Bevenyőd) all managed to find consorts from families which were socially considerably above their own starting level.

Another sizeable subgroup within the constantly *egregius* group is characterised by one or more marriages which stand out “upwards” from an otherwise classic chain of family alliances. It is, of course, very difficult to determine the lines along which a marriage can be judged to be unusually illustrious with regard to the social status of one of the marriage partners. For instance, at the time Bernard Rohfi of Dégse was betrothed with Agnes Erdődi, the latter’s uncle, Thomas Bakócz, had been bishop for seven years and royal chancellor for three years; yet his kinsmen were still, and continued to be, titled merely *egregius*. Moreover, Thomas himself was of peasant origins, whereas the mother of Bernard, as we have seen, descended on his mother’s side from the Kórógyi family which had belonged to the kingdom’s aristocracy from the early Angevin period until its extinction in 1472, and his maternal uncle, Nicholas Csopor, was one of the favourite barons of king Matthias. Nevertheless, the Erdődi were already richer and immensely more influential in 1493, which means that the marriage can be regarded as advantageous from the perspective of the bride.<sup>204</sup>

With these inevitable uncertainties, altogether five other families can be treated as belonging to this subgroup. The wife of Ders Szerdahelyi, Ursula Töttös, was the sister of Ladislas Töttös, who, although his family had not held any baronial office since the Angevin period, certainly belonged to the narrow political élite of the kingdom in the 1440s and 1450s.<sup>205</sup> The situation is somewhat more complicated with Stephen Dersfi in the next generation. The father of his wife, Nicholas Tuz of Lak, was an *egregius* nobleman from the county of Somogy; yet his nephew rose to become master of the doorkeepers in 1465 and ban of Slavonia a year later, and as such was one of the most powerful barons of Matthias.<sup>206</sup> The problem is that we do not know whether the marriage preceded or followed the promotion of John Tuz. Whatever the case, this marriage surely enhanced the prestige of Stephen’s son, Nicholas, which manifested itself in his marriage with Catherine Bánfi of Alsóindva. Catherine, the daughter of James Bánfi and Catherine Szécsi, descended on both lines from families which had held baronial positions since the Angevin

204 Another factor to be taken into consideration in connection with the Slavonian marriage alliances contracted by the Erdődi family is their territorial aspirations south of the Drava. It is evident that these marriages (Rohfi, Szencsei, Musinai), apparently masterminded by archbishop Bakóc himself, played a prominent role in the family’s expansion in Slavonia, and should consequently be judged in terms of political profit and not necessarily in those of social equality.

205 Ladislas himself, after having been a member of Sigismund’s court, was twice treasurer under kings Albert and Ladislas, and also briefly master of the cupbearers: Engel, *Archontológia*, vol. II, 247.

206 On the Tuz see Tringli, “Szlávoniai közgyűlés,” 301–02, 307–08.

period and were enacted as *banderiat* in 1498.<sup>207</sup> Interestingly enough, after the death of his first wife, Nicholas chose again from the *egregius* group by marrying the daughter of Balthasar Batthyány, who only became a “baronial” consort after her brother had been appointed as master of the cupbearers and then ban of Slavonia. Then, however, this alliance certainly yielded fruits, for among the three daughters of Nicholas two were brought up in the court of Batthyány, one of whom was later commended into the queen’s court, whereas the third seems to have lived in the entourage of palatine Bátori’s wife.<sup>208</sup> All this certainly played a role in the post-Mohács career of the Dersfi and in paving their way into the titular aristocracy.

George Dombai also married from the Töttös family, and one of his daughters was married by Simon Móroc, whose grandfather had been ban of Croatia under Louis I.<sup>209</sup> Their case again is a dubious one, for the Móroc never held a baronial office again until their extinction in 1493, yet by reason of their lands they were considered as belonging to the aristocracy. With their two castles, one of them precisely Zdenec in Körös, they were certainly socially superior to the Dombai.<sup>210</sup> The wife of Nicholas Dombai, on the other hand, can by no means be regarded as aristocratic: although related to the counts of Corbavia, the Zákányi never held a baronial office and nor was their landed wealth superior to that of the Dombai.<sup>211</sup> In the second half of the fifteenth century, moreover, the families of all the known consorts of the Dombai (Gudovci, Kapitánfi, Garázda of Keresztúr) belonged to the same *egregius* group as the Dombai themselves.

In the case of the Kasztellánfi a long series of “ordinary” marriages was broken when George Kasztellánfi married Helen of Corbavia, the daughter of count Charles and Catherine Újlaki. The maternal grandfather of Helen was Nicholas Újlaki, king of Bosnia himself. Yet, as in the case of Nicholas Dersfi, after the death of his first wife George stepped back again one category, and married from the *egregius* Ostfi family, and so did his son John despite the aristocratic background of his mother. As for the Pogány, all the known marriage partners belong again to the constantly *egregius* group; the only apparent exception is Euphrosyne Várdai, the wife of Sigismund Pogány. By the time of the marriage, the various branches of the Várdai family had held at least three baronial offices, and had given one archbishop and two bishops

207 Engel, *Középkori Magyar Genealógia*, Balog nem 3. Szécsi 1–2. tábla; *ibid.*, Hahót nem 3–4. tábla; Engel, “Magyar világi nagybirtok,” 31, 46–47.

208 MNL OL, DL 104 464: letter of Perpetua Batthyány to her daughter. The mistress of the latter is called “graciosa ac serenissima domina tua,” whom (on the very grounds of her title) I identify with duchess Sophie, the wife of palatine Bátori.

209 Engel, *Archontológia*, vol. I, 23.

210 Engel, “Magyar világi nagybirtok,” 48, 53.

211 On the relationship with the counts of Corbavia see Engel, *Középkori Magyar Genealógia*, Korbáviai grófok. On the landed wealth of the family see Csánki, *Történelmi földrajz*, vol. II, 584–85.

to the church; moreover, after the acquisition of the Töttös inheritance they were certainly a lot richer than the Pogány.<sup>212</sup> And finally the Batthyány, whose marriage partners until the 1520s seem to have belonged to the same social group as those of the Grebeni before, made a leap when Francis Batthyány married a lady-in-waiting of queen Mary and his nephew was betrothed with Magdalena Kanizsai.

A special case, but partly belonging to the same subgroup, would be that of Balthasar Alapi. His three consequent marriages reflect an apparently increasing trend socially, topped by a seemingly "aristocratic" connection. That Barbara Swampek was a more illustrious match than the daughter of a Zagreb merchant, needs no justification. In a sense, George Swampek himself can be regarded as a member of the aristocracy, for his wife was the daughter of John Marcali, once ban of Slavonia, and member of one of the richest baronial families in the mid-fifteenth century. Yet neither George himself nor his son, Sylvester, proved able to acquire at least part of the Marcali wealth, and both were constantly titled merely *egregius*. Moreover, for the second time George married the widow of Stephen Pósa, alispán of Arad, again only *egregius*.<sup>213</sup> As for the Sárkány of Ákosháza family, Ambrose made indeed a spectacular career which led through various posts in the royal court to the office of the judge royal, but his heirless death on the field of Mohács meant the end of the family's rise, and his kinsmen continued their life on a merely provincial level.<sup>214</sup> It is, consequently, no surprise that John Alapi held no baronial office, and it was his marriage with Margaret of Zrin that paved the way for his son, Caspar, to the banship of Croatia in the 1570s.

These families, as we have seen, all belonged to the very top layer of the nobility by any possible standards, and four among them also produced at least one baron in the course of their history. What should be emphasised,

212 On the offices see Engel, *Archontológia*, vol. II, 254; Soós, *Magyarország kincstartói*, 55–56; on the prelates from the family, Engel, *Középkori Magyar Genealógia*, Gútleked nem 5. Sárvármonostori ág, 10–11. tábla: Várdai. The Töttös wealth alone amounted to two castles and four market towns (Engel, "Magyar világi nagybirtok," 33), whereas in the mid-sixteenth century the Várdai owned more than 700 tenant plots in the county of Szabolcs alone (Pál Engel, "Szabolcs megye birtokviszonyai a 14–16. században" [The Distribution of Landed Wealth in the County of Szabolcs in the Fourteenth to Sixteenth Centuries], in idem, *Honor, vár, ispánság*, 602).

213 MNL OL, DL 93 481 (the second wife of George), DL 103 776, DL 17 883. The castle of Szentgyörgyvár/Békavár in Zala county was in the hands of George Swampek for some time, but in 1479 he forfeited it for infidelity. See Richárd Horváth, Tibor Neumann and Norbert C. Tóth, eds., *Documenta ad historiam familiae Bátori de Ecsed spectantia I. Diplomata 1393–1540* (Nyíregyháza: Jósa András Múzeum, 2011), no. 109. The Marcali inheritance devolved on the Bátori family by virtue of the treaty previously concluded between them (ibid., no. 102, and see also Engel, "Magyar világi nagybirtok," 56).

214 Kubinyi, "Ákosházi Sárkány család XVI. századi történetéhez" (cited above in n. 162 on p. 55); Irén Bilkei, "Okleveles adatok az Ákosházi Sárkány család XVI. századi történetéhez" [Documents Illustrating the History of the Sárkány of Ákosháza Family in the Sixteenth Century], in *Zalai történeti tanulmányok* [Studies on the History of Zala], ed. Irén Bilkei (Zalaegerszeg: n.p., 1994), 3–16.

however, is that these extraordinary marriages apparently failed to have any long-term consequences with regard to the social position of the families concerned. In this respect they form an interesting parallel with the likewise ephemeral nature of the baronial career which also characterised the history of these families. The exception in this case is the Batthyány family: the two marriages just referred to in the 1520s in a sense both completed and symbolised the family's arrival into the ranks of the aristocracy of which they remained members thereafter.

Two further families, which apparently belong to the same category, should be treated separately nevertheless. One of them is the Csupor. Unfortunately, their marriage alliances are known far less completely than those of the Bocskai or Kasztellánfi, for example. Although we do not know the wife of ban Paul Csupor, we have no reason to doubt the statement of his son Akacius according to which he had descended on both lines from baronial families. Since Akacius himself married Mary Kórógyi, we have two successive aristocratic marriages which, apparently, yielded fruit in the baronial career of Nicholas Csupor. On the face of it, a third marriage, that of Stephen Csupor with Elisabeth Pető of Gerse, should also be termed as aristocratic: Elisabeth was the daughter of John Pető and Anne Szécsényi. The cousin of John, Nicholas, had held the office of master of the cupbearers for some time under Matthias, and John himself became master of the doorkeepers after the death of his son-in-law, yet most members of the populous family remained *egregius* before 1526, and they were certainly not richer than the Csupor themselves.<sup>215</sup>

The case of the Turóci is interesting from another point of view. George Turóci, the son of Benedict and Anne Rohonci, spent the longest period in a baronial office among all the persons treated in this book. Yet, as we have seen above, his situation remained closer to the *egregius* level from several regards, one of them being that of his marriages. Christine Csornai came from a family which operated on a purely regional level throughout, while Catherine Zalai (of Monostor) seems to have originated from the much lower regions of the nobility.<sup>216</sup> On the other hand, Bernard Turóci, although never holding any baronial office, married the much more illustrious Helen Székely of Kövend, and thus came into affinity with the Bánfi, Perényi and Szécsi families,<sup>217</sup> while his sister, evidently thanks to the marriage of his brother, married into

215 Engel, *Középkori Magyar Genealógia*, Nádasd nem 3. tábla: Pető (gersei); Engel, "Magyar világi nagybirtok," 33.

216 The possession of Monostor itself (in Baranya county), of which they were called, belonged at first to the Garai family, and devolved later to duke Corvin, from whom George Turóci held it in pledge. The Zalai must have received (part of) it from either the Garai or the duke himself. Cf. Csánki, *Történelmi földrajz*, vol. II, 508–09, and MNL OL, DL 17 272, DL 21 712 ("Nicolai Zalay" and "Paulo Zalay de Monosthor" respectively). In the former case, remarkably, Nicholas was represented together with Caspar Kórógyi.

217 MNL OL, DL 94 890; Engel, *Középkori magyar genealógia*, Székely (kövendi).



an influential Austrian noble family.<sup>218</sup> This is an important warning against treating marriage alliances as an independent indicator of social standing, a warning which will gain further support below.

As stated above, we are in a much more difficult situation with regard to those families which belong to the variously *nobilis/egregius* group. Our sources only rarely permit the reconstruction of marriage alliances over several generations, which makes generalisations difficult. Not surprisingly, in cases when we have enough evidence, we find that spouses are chosen from the same social group and from within a more confined area. At the same time, alliances with families of the constantly *egregius* group are fairly common. A relatively clear pattern emerges from the example of the Megyericsei, for instance. Three among the known consorts belong to the upper group (Bocskai, Gudovci, Pekri), whereas other three belong to the same group as the Megyericsei as well (Szász, Pálfi, Kamarcai). Somewhat similar is the situation with the Raveni: here the *egregius/nobilis* group is represented by three families (Pálfi, Gereci, Latkfi), whereas the Grebeni (Hermanfi) and the Čavlović belong to the upper one.

In general, it seems that intra-familial divisions, individual careers and the varying fortunes of the families concerned played a more important role than in the case of the top families. For example, after the whole Cirkvenai wealth had been united in the hands of Peter Cirkvenai, he found a spouse from a constantly *egregius* family from the county of Pozsega (Gilétfi), and his daughter was also married with a man of the same category (Paul Kerecsényi). Again, whereas the most successful member of the Ervencei family, Ladislás, managed to marry from the *egregius* Sulyok family,<sup>219</sup> the daughter of his brother had to content herself with a totally insignificant local nobleman called Matthias Vecseszlavci. As for the Kamarcai, we find that three among the known spouses belonged to the upper group (Ostfi, Kerecsényi, Kéméndi); since all three marriages date from the period after 1500, they may be connected to the careers of bishop John and Vitus Garázda; yet, since we have no evidence for the preceding period, there is nothing to compare with.

Nevertheless, some interesting comparisons can be made even at this level which, again, argue against overemphasising the importance of marriage alliances in measuring social position without involving other indicators. The Szász of Tamasovc and Musinai families started from roughly the same

218 On the Puchheim family see Karl Guttkas, *Der Mailberger Bund von 1451. Studien zum Verhältnis von Landesfürst und Ständen um die Mitte des 15. Jahrhunderts*, in *Mitteilungen des Instituts für Österreichische Geschichtsforschung* 74 (1966): 375–76 and *passim*; Neumann, “Békekötés Pozsonyban,” II, 337, and n. 225; MNL OL, DL 14 975: Georg von Puchheim’s lands in the county of Sopron; DL 89 162: Georg von Puchheim “supremus dapifer Austriae ac reverendissime principis ducis Austriae magister curie” (1522).

219 On the Sulyok family see Engel, *Archontológia*, vol. II, 218; Csánki, *Történelmi földrajz*, vol. II, 179, 224; MNL OL, DL 16 811 (Andrew Sulyok castellan of the Maróti at Gyula), DL 46 110.

position at the beginning of the fifteenth century, and both lost the majority of their possessions in the course of the century. In the case of the Szász the declining fortunes of the family clearly reflected themselves in the marriage alliances of the successive generations: whereas Matthias married from the important Szigeti family, and either his son or grandson, perhaps, from the equally significant Matucsinai family, the daughter of John in the fourth generation ended up with the poorer branch of the Megyericsei family, and her daughter married a simple local nobleman.<sup>220</sup> Unfortunately, we do not know the consort of George Berzencei; yet his son, Sandrin, surely contracted a very good (second) marriage despite the fact that his lands had already been reduced to the county of Körös. Since the father of his wife, Ladislas Balassa, married for the second time the widow of Damian Horvát, formerly ban of Slavonia, she may have been the link between the two families. In the next generation, the wife of Nicholas Musinai is unknown to us; what is certain is that the landed wealth of the family remained limited to the estate of Musina, and yet the son of Nicholas managed to marry the sister of Simon Erdődi, bishop of Zagreb. This, of course, was surely connected to the fact that his brother, John, had served as the secretary of archbishop Bakócz; nevertheless, it remains beyond doubt that this marriage was out of keeping with the current social position of Nicholas Musinai.

One further point should be emphasised. Thanks to the particular features of medieval Hungarian law of inheritance, women, be they daughters or widows, did not play such a great role in the social mobility of noble families as can be observed in England, for instance. There, the existence of heiresses and the related institution of jointures were able to modify, definitively or temporarily, the place of an individual family within the local hierarchy on a scale that was unknown in Hungary. Here, the strict limitations set by collateral male relatives on female inheritance, and the consequent inhibition on the alienation of inherited land to females (except in some very special cases) prevented both daughters and widows from exerting the kind of negative influence on the social position of the families of their husbands which was so common in England. There were, of course, exceptions to the rules in Hungary as well, such as prefection, for instance, but these remained confined enough for them to be of more than ephemeral importance from the point of view of the general course of social mobility within the nobility.<sup>221</sup>

220 On the Szigeti, and later Antimus family see Engel, *Archontológia*, vol. II, 13, 231. On the Matucsinai see Csánki, *Történelmi földrajz*, vol. II, 456, 553–54, and Engel, *Archontológia*, vol. II, 157.

221 England: Carpenter, *Locality and Polity*, 105–16; on the rules of female inheritance in Hungary: Rady, *Nobility, Land and Service*, 103–07.

## 3.6. THE NOBILITY AND THE CHURCH

As in the case of *familiaritas* and marriage, there can be no place here for an extensive analysis of the multiple ties which existed between the nobility and the different local ecclesiastical institutions.<sup>222</sup> Therefore, I only propose to examine the role of ecclesiastical careers from two, closely connected, points of view: their place within the history of the individual families, and, secondly, the potential they had, if at all, in promoting upward social mobility. Unfortunately, this aspect of noble life is as unresearched as the rest, so no comparisons can be made; the patterns I can identify, on the other hand, will hopefully be useful for others.

Pál Engel, studying the fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries, found a clear correspondence between the group he called *nagybirtokosok*, court career and the middling positions (provostries/canonries) within the ecclesiastical hierarchy.<sup>223</sup> This pattern, if the role of court career is left out of consideration, can also be observed in the county of Körös in the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries. Altogether eight cases can be treated as belonging to this pattern, involving the Bocskai, Cirkvenai, Csupor, Dombai, Grebeni, Kristallóci (Szerecsen), Megyericsei, and Pekri families.<sup>224</sup> The basic feature of this pattern is that it is a member of a family which already belongs, without any further qualification, to the highest ranks of the nobility of the county who receives a middling position in the church, in our cases a canonry. The church is normally one of the two local institutions, the bishopric of Zagreb or the chapter of Csázma, but, as the examples of John Megyericsei and Michael Pekri show, churches outside Slavonia were by no means excluded. With the exception of Demetrius Csupor, to whom I will return in a moment, canonry was the endpoint of church career. It should be added immediately, however, that provost Vitus was not born Bocskai, so his case may even be treated apart. But even if he is included, when we compare our handful of families with the great number of those where no similar pattern can be identified, it becomes evident that church career played no important role in terms of career possibilities, which may be in connection with the limited political role of the church itself in general below the level of the prelates. The church can certainly not be regarded as a means of getting rid of at least some of the offspring in noble families, for the practice cannot be observed even in cases when the

222 On these see Fügedi, *Elefánthyak*, 161–62; Pálosfalvi, “Grebeni Hermanfi,” II, 278.

223 Engel, *Ung megye*, 103.

224 I leave out of consideration both those positions which preceded the fifteenth century, such as the canonry of Emeric Kasztellánfi, for instance, and those which a given family member held before the family itself came to Slavonia, which is the case with provost Stephen Botos. I have also ignored the canonry held by Stephen Hásságyi, which was evidently no more than a sort of salary. Cf. Köblös, *Egyházi középélet*, 328–29.

existence of several sons can be established.<sup>225</sup> In view of this fact it is at least reasonable to suppose that in the background of such careers there stood personal inclination. That it may have been so is also proved by the isolated nature of these church careers within the history of the individual families. The only exception here is the Cirkvenai family, unique in the sense that in no other family do we find two parallel church careers in one and the same generation.

On the other hand, the Cirkvenai already take us down to that region of the leading nobility which, as we have already seen, was characterised by the non regular or merely temporary attribution of the *egregius* title. The first point to emphasise is that clerical office does not seem any more frequent here than in the previous group, but the pattern is certainly more varied. On the one hand, multiple church careers within the individual families seem more frequent, and, on the other hand, their role with regard to the general course of the history of the individual families appear to have been more decisive. We find at least three families, the Kamarcai, the Jakószerdahelyi and the Tompa of Horzova, in which two, or even three, persons joined the church in successive generations. Although impossible to prove, it is probable that the career of Thomas Tompa as canon of Zagreb and Esztergom played a role in the rise of Michael Tompa, and the same influence can be supposed to have worked in the case of Peter Gudovci and his brother Matthias, who should certainly be regarded as members of this inferior group before the rapid rise of Peter began in the 1460s. How this influence operated in practice is mere guesswork, although it is beyond doubt that both the archbishop of Esztergom and the bishop of Zagreb were in a position to lend support on the highest possible level to the kinsmen of the canons in their respective churches. On the other hand, the two canonries held by members of the Jakószerdahelyi family, one of them even a royal chaplain, does not appear to have bettered to any considerable extent the position of the family itself. This situation is even more conspicuous in the case of the Kamarcai, where neither the career of bishop John, nor that of provost Michael produced any improvement in the position of their family in the form of royal grants or other patronage.<sup>226</sup> It is of course possible, although impossible to demonstrate, that these humanist prelates separated themselves so completely from their own family background that they did not even make any effort at enlarging the family wealth through royal patronage. It is much more probable, however, that they

225 This confirms the view of Pál Engel, who stated, with regard to the late middle ages, that "the Hungarian nobility were for some reason unwilling to give their younger sons to the Church, though it would have provided a much better living for many of them" (*The Realm of Saint Stephen*, 335). The latter half of this statement can be doubted, however, in view of the rather modest landed wealth of the lesser chapters and collegiate churches.

226 It is possible that bishop John played some role in the career of Vitus Garázda, but even if it was so, it was certainly not the kind of patronage which regarded as its aim the extension of family patrimony.

were neither politically influent nor socially important enough for the ruler to feel the necessity to reinforce their position, and especially their fidelity, through sizeable grants. In the absence of utterances on the part of the prelates themselves, and of other contemporary information in this regard, it is one of those aspects of noble life which are bound to remain beyond our comprehension.

Interestingly, we can observe the same phenomenon in case of the other bishop produced by the families under investigation, namely Demetrius Csutor. His appointment as bishop of Knin and then of Zagreb was the result of the dominant influence of the Tallóci brothers, whereas his translation to the see of Győr the result of a compromise worked out by Matthias and his advisers.<sup>227</sup> Yet again, although as a bishop he was member of the royal council, and thus supposedly close to the source of royal patronage, he does not seem to have received considerable donations for his family, and apparently was unable to save at least elements of the immense landed wealth conferred upon his nephew, Nicholas, after the death of the latter. The accumulation of family wealth for churchmen was not uncommon, though, as the examples of clerics such as Gabriel Matucsinaï or Thomas Bakóc show;<sup>228</sup> yet the decisive element here seems to have been not the intent to accumulate but the royal will to promote it. If we look at those Slavonian prelates who rose from the lower ranks of the nobility, such as Matthias Gatalóci, John Vitéz (the elder) and Janus Pannonius, we likewise see that their career remained an intermezzo in the history of their respective families, and was not enough even to establish them within the higher ranks of the nobility in their native region. Why it was so should be the subject of further research; but the limited role of church career in social advancement is evident.

There are some persons in our sample for whom even the middle ranks of the church hierarchy remained unattainable, or simply undesired. Of course, in trying to judge these cases we again struggle with the painful lack of sources. Thus, it is far from certain that the career of Gregory Megyericsi, presumably the son of John, once mentioned as a simple cleric, ended because his influential father died, or because he was not talented or ambitious enough; it is possible that he also died. The two other examples are more revelative, however. Ladislás Grebeni, who seems to have been canon of Zagreb for some time, but died as simple parish priest of the Saint Martin church at Kemlék,

227 Cf. Vilmos Fraknói, *A magyar királyi kegyúri jog Szent Istvántól Mária Teréziáig* [The Royal Right of Patronage in Hungary from Saint Stephen to Maria Theresia] (Budapest: Magyar Tudományos Akadémia, 1895), 188–98. Also politically motivated was the appointment of Francis Tahi as prior of Vrana at the very end of the period examined here, and simply served to confirm the authority of his father, John, and legitimise his possession of the castles and possessions of the priory. I have therefore left him out of consideration.

228 MNL OL, DL 74 518: donation by king Matthias to archbishop Gabriel Matucsinaï and his brother Sigismund of the castle of Nevna in Valkó county and its appurtenances. On the acquisitions of Bakóc see n 10 on page 27.

came from one of the most influential noble families of Körös. Yet he belonged to that branch of the family which definitively lost its landed wealth after 1445, and thus apparently lacked the support or the means to fund his education, which would have been necessary to further ascend the church hierarchy.<sup>229</sup> The same may apply to Ladislás Raveni, parish priest of Raven itself, although his family belonged to the second rank of the leading nobility; but, since the Cirkvenai, who belonged to the same social level, managed nevertheless to provide two canons, it seems more probable that in the case of Ladislás it was a matter of personal decision that he remained parish priest of his native settlement.

One more hypothesis should at least be risked. In view of the fact that, unlike provostships in the major chapters, a simple canonry was in all probability not an important source of revenue,<sup>230</sup> and the way to prelacies was generally subjected to all sorts of political considerations, it is possible that the educated members of the nobility preferred the possibilities offered by lay literacy. We have seen that literacy played a role in almost all cases in which we experienced either durable or temporary social rise, and we have also seen that the number of those Slavonian noblemen who became involved in some way or another in the work of either the local or the central law courts and the chanceries was considerably greater than of those who entered the Church. Not all of them made their fortune there, of course, but it appears nonetheless that the prospects offered by lay literacy outshined in the eyes of the nobility those presented by the Church. If, as it seems indeed to be the case, Nicholas Orros started his career as a cleric, and then shifted to a lay intellectual career, this would be at least a further indication that this hypothesis is worth further investigation.

The role of the monastic orders appears to have been even more limited than that of the secular clergy. Of course the nobility in the county of Körös maintained manifold contacts with the local monastic establishments, offering considerable donations for the preservation of their and their ancestors' memory, as the surviving testaments amply prove.<sup>231</sup> Yet we have only two instances within our sample of noblemen taking the habit. In both cases, that of Blaise Bocskai and George Csupor, we seem to deal with a decision taken late in life to leave the world. George, on the other hand, apparently entered his own foundation. That in both cases it was the Franciscan order which was preferred, bears testimony to the continuing influence and popularity which

229 We have seen above that it was Ladislás Hermanfi who financed the schooling of at least one of his distant kinsmen, after he had accumulated again a very sizeable landed wealth.

230 Mályusz, *Egyházi társadalom*, 119.

231 See for example the case of Ladislás Hermanfi, who allotted in his will almost three thousand florins to, among other institutions, the local monasteries of the Dominicans and Franciscans, but also to various parish churches and other minor ecclesiastical institutions. Cf. MNL OL, DL 107 608, DL 101 638.



the mendicant orders enjoyed.<sup>232</sup> To Blaise and George can be added three noblewomen, Helen Bocskai, Dorothy Kakas (the widow of George Kapitánfi), and Sophie Grebeni (the widow of Peter Bikszádi), all of whom joined the Dominican cloister on the Island of the Rabbits, again an indication of the same trend. In the case of Dorothy and Sophie it is evident that the decision was taken after becoming widows, whereas Helen Bocskai, who even became head of the nunnery, may have been the only one to have lived throughout in the cloister.

### 3.7. ELITE OR NOT? INTERNAL STRATIFICATION AND DEFINITION

Having carried out the social analysis, grouped around certain key topics, of the families chosen, it is time to answer two questions of fundamental importance: can this group of families be regarded as a separate social entity within noble society at all? And, secondly, can it be regarded as comprising elements of roughly the same worth, so that the group itself can be clearly distinguished from groups situated above and below? The answer to this question is hindered by a number of obstacles, the two most important being the long timespan of the inquiry, the other the lack of clear markers. For, as it must already have become obvious, while it is relatively easy to speak about different layers within the nobility in general, the same task becomes all the more difficult when trying to interpret a definite sample which stretches to four, or even five generations. Comparisons need to be done simultaneously but also long-term structures reconstructed, and the two often yield contradicting results. To give but one example, so far I have treated as members of the same layer within the nobility both the Grebeni and the Ervencei families, while emphasising that in terms of title, officeholding and landed wealth the Grebeni were situated higher on the social ladder than the Ervencei. In fact, in the beginning and the end of the fifteenth century, the Grebeni were indeed much richer and enjoyed much more prestige than the Ervencei; yet there was a period in the middle of the century when the Ervencei were certainly richer and probably more influential than the Grebeni. But the main problem is that, at least in the second half of the century, both families had branches which shared this wealth and influence only partially or not at all. Thus, it would probably be more correct to say that in the 1450s and early 1460s Ladislás Ervencei was more influential than Ladislás Hermanfi, whereas around 1490 Ladislás Hermanfi was immensely richer than the Ervencei; on

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232 Engel, *Realm of Saint Stephen*, 336–37.

the other hand, the latter were surely richer and more prestigious than the other branches of the Grebeni. Consequently, at first we have to deal with these internal divisions, to be able to address the first question formulated above.

The first problem is what exactly can be regarded as a family; more exactly, to what extent can a group of families descended from a common ancestor be taken as a social unit with a common identity. With regard to the end of the fourteenth century, Pál Engel offered the following definition: "Family [...] should be regarded as a group of persons mutually tied to each other by links of land ownership and blood. Within this community relationships based on land and blood both presuppose and define each other. Those people are considered as members of the same family who own land together by virtue of common origins, and family property is what belongs to all the descendants of a common ancestor."<sup>233</sup> Equally importantly, he found that name, be it that of a piece of land or a "family name," is still almost never the distinctive feature of any noble family. As for Erik Fügedi, he got round the problem by inventing the term clan (basically a term for the Hungarian *nemzetség*), and spoke about its various branches as if they indeed constituted a recognisable unit. In his interpretation, the clan comprised "several interrelated families, in some cases whole blocks of families, whose members were tied together by a patrilineal relationship". This horizontal patrilineal kin-group, moreover, could extend over several generations in time, thus constituting an apparently unlimited network both horizontally and vertically.<sup>234</sup>

To enlighten the problem we are facing with regard to the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, it is worth citing the case of the Szencsei. Hitherto, I have always referred to them as *the Szencsei family*. In fact, however, the ancestors of the two branches within the family whose members belong to the constantly *egregius* group, that is, masters Kakas and Lökös, had divided their family lands as early as the middle of the fourteenth century, and the sons of John Szencsei in the late fifteenth century were merely related to viceban Ladislás Szencsei in the sixth degree of consanguinity. The distance in terms of kinship of the members of the supposed branch of Mihalc from both the other branches was even greater. Yet all three branches were called constantly of Szencse, and, moreover, the two branches descended from Kakas and Lökös shared the family's main symbol of power, the castle of Szombathely. So should we continue to speak about one Szencsei family, or should we distinguish among three different families? Did the various branches of the Szencsei constitute a unit, a clan in the sense of Fügedi, whose analysis as a block is meaningful? The same problem emerges with regard to several families which had already been implanted in the county of Körös for a long time at the period when our

<sup>233</sup> Engel, *Ung megye*, 23.

<sup>234</sup> Fügedi, *Elefántnyak*, 7.

inquiry starts, and proved prolific enough to split into several branches: the Bocskai, Ervencei, Fánecs, Gereci, Gorbonoki, Grebeni, Borotva, Kamarcai, Kapitánfi, Kasztellánfi, Pekri, Rohfi families and the whole Vojk kindred all belong to this category.

The question has some important implications. For the two branches of the Szencsei which descended from Kakas and Lökös would both qualify for membership of the noble élite by any standard: each produced a viceban, possessed land well in excess of a hundred tenant sessions, all members were constantly titled *egregius*, and none of them ever served a lord below the rank of baron or bishop, not to speak about the king. If one involved the supposed Mihalcs branch as well, on the other hand, the picture would be considerably different, and classification much more problematic. At the very beginning of our period, viceban Paul would obviously qualify as a member of the élite, but, consequently, none of his supposed descendants would. According to the definition offered by Fügedi, in the case of the Szencsei, for instance, all the branches of considerably different wealth and prestige should be regarded as parts of the same unit, thus making classification extremely difficult.

In some cases the answer to the problem appears obvious. The Grebeni, as mentioned above, were split so completely by the aggression of John Vitovec in 1445/46 that the surviving branches apparently gradually lost almost all contacts with each other. Vitovec forced them one by one to abandon their claims to the family castle of Greben, and thus the most important focal point for the family was lost. There remained only the name, but even that began to change in the case of John Grebeni, already called of Miketinc as well. It is different with the Fánecs, however. Nicholas Fánecs was more distantly related to the descendants of Ladislás, son of Fánecs, than Ladislás Hermanfi was to John Grebeni of Miketinc, and his forbears had even been removed from Slavonia for some time; yet he did continue to possess a good portion of the Fánecs lands in Körös after his return there, and was constantly called Fánecs of Gordova. But his office (*juratus*) and title (*nobilis*) clearly exclude him being assigned to the same category to where his kinsmen in the other branch (court knight, viceban, alispán, *egregius*) undoubtedly belong. The example of the Kasztellánfi is somewhat similar to that of the Szencsei. In the late fifteenth century, the descendants of Ladislás and Adam, the sons of Peter Castellan, possessed their lands in division: whereas George owned the *castellum* of Bikszád and half of the castle of Zselnyak, Nicholas, son of Akacius, owned the estate and *castellum* of Szentlélek together with the other half of Zselnyak. Again, we see that one fortification is held jointly, and the two distant kinsmen are sometimes seen as acting together. Yet the names are changing: whereas Nicholas is often called son of Akacius (*Akacii*, *Akacfi*), George is constantly mentioned as Kasztellánfi, but frequently as of Bikszád as well. His son, on the other hand, is never called of Bikszád, but always of Szentlélek again.<sup>235</sup>

235 On the names see Maček-Jurković, *Rodoslov plemića*, 174–75, 131–33, 153–57.

Yet, as in the case of the Szencsei, since both branches of the family apparently enjoyed roughly the same wealth and prestige throughout the fifteenth century and beyond, there is no problem in locating them simply as “the Kasztellánfi” within the élite.

Defining what a family was, however, is not the only problem to be solved when trying to establish an internal classification within the group of nobility studied here. For it was not only the various branches of a given family, but also various individuals or entire generations within a given family, which differed from each other in terms of landed wealth, career, prestige and influence to the extent that their belonging to the same category can be questioned. It is evident that Vitus Garázda of Kamarca, for example, belonged to the top layer of the nobility of Körös in the years around 1500: leading *familiaris* of the bishop of Pécs, then viceban, always titled *egregius*, marrying from one of the richest families in the neighbouring county of Baranya, and possessing land in the region of a hundred tenant plots, his place is evident even if he personally is not attested to have possessed any fortification. His son, Akacius, is already a dubious case, however: variously titled *nobilis* and *egregius*, holding no office at all, but turning up as a royal man with simple *nobiles*, it is only his marriage which argues for his inclusion into the élite. And the kinsmen of Vitus in the other branches of the Kamarcai family seem fairly below the mark as well. Again, there is no doubt that the three sons of Stephen Kapitánfi, George, Stephen and Andrew, all belonged to the élite of the nobility in Körös: service, officeholding, marriages, landed wealth, title (*egregii* without exception) and the possession of a fortification all support this. In the next generation, however, the picture changes: the three sons of Stephen shared but a portion of the ancient family estate, apparently held no office at all, and were no more titled consequently *egregius*. Moreover, the marriages of their sisters show that their local prestige fell accordingly.

Problems are the same obvious in the families which descended from Isaac. At the beginning of our period, John Borotva and his sons evidently enjoyed considerable prestige locally, the roots of which reached back to the late Árpád and early Angevin period. Thereafter, however, it is only viceban Nicholas and his descendants who can be regarded as belonging to the noble élite in terms of title (sometimes titled *egregius*), office (viceban, tax-collector) and landed wealth (including the possession of a *castellum*). Michael Raveni, the prothonotary, surely counted among the most prestigious members of the nobility in Körös thanks to his very office, but also to his closeness to the king and emperor; his prestige, or the memory of it, must have played a role in the marriages his daughter and granddaughter contracted. But it is very dubious whether his son, Stephen, who was a mere *szolgabíró*, can still be counted as belonging to the élite. As for the Cirkvenai, the “distribution of social prestige” is more even: Ladislás, as ispán of Zagreb, and in the next generation Paul, as prothonotary, should probably be reckoned among the noble élite of the county, and still one generation further their prestige was maintained by the

two canons, perhaps playing a role in the marriage of Peter Cirkvenai, and in that of the latter's daughter. The case of the Berzencei/Musinaí introduces another problem: in the first two decades of the fifteenth century, George Berzencei, alispán, owner of a castle and two *castella*, certainly belonged to the noble élite, but it is dubious whether he can be counted among that of Körös, as the majority of his lands, together with two of his fortifications, lay in Somogy, and he was not even called of Musina. His grandsons, Nicholas and Bernard, on the other hand, who surely resided south of the Drava, did not belong to the same category as their grandfather: holding no office, turning up as simple royal men, it is only the *castellum* at Musina and the family of their stepmother which elevate them above the petty nobility.

By now it may seem that, *mutatis mutandis*, we are very close to the situation observed with regard to the élites of early medieval Europe: "What I mean by an aristocrat is a member of a (normally landed) political élite, someone who could wield some form of power simply because of who [...] he was. [...] status was seldom precisely defined, whether we see a given local leader as "aristocratic" or not depends largely on our own decisions about where to draw the line in any given period or region."<sup>236</sup> Of course, late medieval Hungary cannot be compared to early medieval Europe; yet, in the absence of clearly defined markers it is indeed a matter of individual decision where we draw the dividing lines within the nobility. That Ladislás Hermanfi stood higher in the social hierarchy than, let's say, Nicholas Borotva or Michael Berivojszentiváni, may seem obvious; it is still possible, however, that from a certain perspective and at certain points in time they were all perceived as belonging to the same category within the nobility.

The problem, however, is not limited to either the earlier middle ages or late medieval Hungary, and here it may be worth returning to the example of late medieval England, already referred to in the opening chapters. There, by the end of the fourteenth century, three different ranks had established themselves within the class of landowners below the peerage, the members of which "styled themselves as knights, esquires or gentlemen, in that order." These three layers were clearly distinguishable from each other by certain outward marks. On the other hand, however, "difficulty comes with trying to view the esquires as a homogeneous group. Some of them are not realistically distinguishable from the gentlemen, while others seem to be of much the same status as the knights."<sup>237</sup> That is, if we disregard titles, the same difficulties emerge as in Hungary, where no titles exist at all in the English sense. Another, but partly overlapping, approach distinguishes within the

236 Chris Wickham, *Framing the Early Middle Ages. Europe and the Mediterranean*, 400–800, Oxford: OUP, 2005. 153. In fact, the criteria elaborated by this author in order to recognise and identify members of the aristocracy are not very far from those used for later periods and also here: "distinction of ancestry; landed wealth; position in an official hierarchy; imperial or royal favour; [...] recognition by other political leaders; and lifestyle." *Ibid.*, 154.

237 Given-Wilson, *English Nobility*, 70.

gentry between a upper stratum called 'county gentry', and a much wider lower stratum referred to as 'parish gentry'. Their distinguishing characteristics in social and political terms are as follow: the "county gentry" increasingly monopolises certain offices, eventually coming to form "the real 'political community' of the shire," while leaving other, inferior offices to the 'parish gentry'; members of the upper stratum "usually found service with the king or with the great local lords," whereas those of the lesser gentry families "tended to be attached to the lesser barons;" the families belonging to the upper group "tended to marry each other, to conduct their legal and familial transactions with each other," the 'parish gentry' also moving "within their own social and business circles, while "kinship ties sometimes cut across these distinctions." And, finally, the "county gentry not only held substantially more land, but they often held land throughout their counties and in other counties as well;" whereas the "landed interests of the parish gentry were much more localised."<sup>238</sup>

This approach can, with some modifications of course, be used with regard to the late medieval Hungarian nobility as well. The table on page 407 will serve as a useful starting point. In the first days of June 1510, an assembly was held at Martinyanc, one of the possessions of the Hásságyi family in the county of Körös. The persons who gathered there, considering in their minds the ways and means by which their ancestors had maintained themselves in the midst of all sorts of misfortunes, before all by joining each other in perfect friendship (*amicicia*), adopted a whole series of measures in order to protect themselves and their offspring from the evils of the time.<sup>239</sup> The assembly came together in a critical period, during the revolt of ban Andrew Both against royal authority, when justice was indeed suspended in the province. Yet those present made no reference to the *universitas* of the Slavonian nobility as was customary in documents issued by similar gatherings; they only emphasised that their alliance was not directed against either the king or the prelates and barons, to whom they were keen on preserving all the fidelity that was due to them. Consequently, the gathering and the charter issued by it is much more similar in its nature to the sworn leagues so common in the second half of the Jagiellonian period<sup>240</sup> than to the periodical assemblies of the Slavonian nobility and the documents drafted in the name of its *universitas*. The list of those present at Martinyanc, with three exceptions,<sup>241</sup> is the following;<sup>242</sup> in the five columns I give the available information with regard

238 Ibid., 71–74.

239 MNL OL, DL 94 734.

240 See e.g. Szabó, *Magyar országgyűlések*, 147–49, 181–84.

241 I did not count Nicholas Székely of Kövend, John Gyulai and Benedict Rátkai. On the first two see the justification above in chapter 2.1; as for Rátkay, he had no land in Körös.

242 The names follow each other in the same order in which they are listed by the charter itself. In fact, George and Nicholas Kasztellánfi are mentioned separately, and so are George and



to five features of social prestige, which have all been examined in the course of the present book.<sup>243</sup>

	Office	"Community"	Title	Fortification	Court connection
Bernard Turóci	viceban	Slavonian envoy	<i>egregius</i>	castle	baron
George and Nicholas Kasztellánfi	viceban	Slavonian envoy	<i>egregius</i>	castle	court <i>familiaris</i>
Stephen Gorbonoki	ispán of Zagreb		<i>egregius</i>	castle	<i>aulicus</i>
Stephen, Louis and John Pekri	viceban	Slavonian envoy, captain	<i>egregius</i>	castle	court <i>familiaris</i>
George and Paul Kerecsényi	viceban	Slavonian captain	<i>egregius</i>	<i>castellum</i>	assessor
Francis Kecser	episcopal administrator		<i>egregius</i>	castle	<i>aulicus</i>
Stephen Gudovci	prothonotary	Slavonian envoy	<i>egregius</i>	<i>castellum</i>	
Elias Businci	viceban	Slavonian envoy	<i>egregius</i>	<i>castellum</i>	(provisor of Jajce)
Francis Nelepeci	viceban		<i>egregius</i>	castle	
Stephen Hásságyi	prothonotary	Slavonian envoy	<i>egregius</i>	<i>castellum</i>	prothonotary, judge royal
Stephen and Pangracius Szencsei	viceban	Slavonian envoy	<i>egregius</i>	castle	court <i>familiaris</i>
Sigismund Pogány		Slavonian envoy	<i>egregius</i>	castle	assessor, etc.
Nicholas Dersfi	viceban	Slavonian envoy, captain	<i>egregius</i>	castle	court knight
Paul Čavlović	viceban		<i>egregius</i>	<i>castellum</i>	royal councillor
Gregory Simonović (of Predriho)	viceban		<i>egregius</i>	castle	
Michael and Nicholas Kerhen	viceban	Slavonian envoy	<i>egregius</i>	(1/3 castle)	

Paul Kerecsényi, and Stephen and Louis Pekri on the one hand, and John Pekri on the other; for the sake of convenience, I have united them in the same cell.

- 243 The information concerns in all cases the whole family and not necessarily the person mentioned. Thus, if any member of the family was viceban in the period between 1400 and 1526, I put viceban in the second column, and so on. As for castles, I followed the method explained above, that is, put castle in the fourth column if at any time within the period between 1400 and 1526 the family had one by whatever title.

The table is highly illustrative. Applying the criteria listed above with regard to the 'county gentry' in late medieval England, we can conclude that 1. the families listed here did in a sense dominate the more important local offices (before all of those of viceban and prothonotary, but also captain of Slavonia, and I count here delegations as envoys elected by the noble *universitas*); 2. all of them belonged to the category of *familiaritas* characterised by the service of either to the king or to the magnates and prelates (although the latter is not indicated here, we have seen it in the chapter on *familiaritas* that it was indeed so; the only exception being, again, the Kerhen); 3. all of them belonged to the top layer of non-baronial landowners, the majority among them possessing, if only temporarily, a fortification generally referred to as a castle; 4. the great majority among them owned land in more than one county;<sup>244</sup> 5. finally, as the charter itself shows, they indeed formed in a sense the "real political community" of the county. There is one important difference, however: whereas in England "it was the families who had been established in the shire longest who tended to belong to the county gentry,"<sup>245</sup> in our case the duration of settlement in Körös does not seem to have played any role: seven among the families can be regarded as "newcomers" in Slavonia.

Of course, the list is not complete even if we keep to the very period around 1510. To start with, Balthasar Batthyány and Balthasar Alapi surely belonged to the same group then; the reasons of their not joining the "league" may have been purely practical. Nicholas Tulbertfi had died without a male heir by this time, and John Tahi was yet to enter this group. Other absences are more indicative, however: the Fánecs, the Bocskai, the Kapitánfi and the Musinai families were still represented in Körös, and, although they too may be missing for some trivial reasons, it is interesting that three of them were in a clearly descending phase in terms of landed wealth and social prestige, and we have seen above that the Fánecs also "disappear" from the political scene by the 1510s. If we could take the picture some twenty years before, we would certainly have to count as members of the 'county nobility' not only the Fánecs, the Bocskai and the Kapitánfi, but also the Csupor, the Rohfi of Décsé, the Dombai, Albert Lónyai, and Nicholas Tulbertfi. Or, rather, in view of what has been said about the problems around the notion of family itself, it is perhaps more correct to say that among the three branches of the Szencsei, two belonged to this élite group, and the Fánecs were also split by internal divisions; on the other hand both branches of either the Rohfi or the Kasztellánfi should be counted as parts of this narrow élite.

244 The exceptions here are Stephen Gudovci and Francis Nelepeci; but, as we have seen, the Nelepeci themselves possessed outside Körös as well before the 1460s, and Stephen Gudovci is reasonably supposed to have acquired some land with the hands of his wife in the county of Zala.

245 Given-Wilson, *English Nobility*, 74.

The problem is that no similar list can be prepared a hundred years before. There are basically two reasons for this, and they are connected to each other. Firstly, we have no similar sources to work with, and, secondly, it is so because there existed neither “monopoly of offices” nor “real political community” of the county around 1400. As we have seen above, it was only from the 1440s that the Slavonian nobility began to have a decisive influence upon the election of the ban’s deputy, and in the 1460s that they finally succeeded in controlling through the office of (deputy-)prothonotary the process of justice. It was also from the 1440s on that envoys elected by the Slavonian nobility were sent regularly to the king. Nevertheless, a closer analysis of the lists we do have from the 1430s on does yield some interesting results, and offers some help in reconstructing some longer trends in social development.

If we look at the list of 1439, which is the oldest of its type, we find there from the county of Körös the Csupor (baron), Dombai (baron), Fáncs (baron), Kasztellánfi (viceban), Grebeni (viceban), Rohfi, Bikszádi (court knight), Bocskai (court knight), Ludbregi, Gereci, Megyericsei (court *familiaris*), Kustyer and Kapitánfi (Croatian viceban, alispán) families; that is, the great majority among them are already singled out by office-holding and close connections to the court. Moreover, probably eight among them had been established south of the Drava since the thirteenth century,<sup>246</sup> and thus belonged to the most “ancient” layer of the local nobility. If we add to them those families from the list of 1510 which flourished in Körös already in the beginning of the fifteenth century (Dersfi, Gorbonoki, Nelepeci), and those which appear in the upper section of the later lists (such as Nicholas Pozsegai, for instance,) we come as close as possible to grasp what can be regarded as the early form of the ‘county nobility’. This observation can safely be extended to all the similar lists which have come down to us: in all of them the first places of the list are occupied by families which belong by any measure to the top layer of the nobility. The close connection between office and position is evident, as the table on page 411 shows.

The place occupied by the Dombai in the middle section of the fifteenth century is conspicuous, but wholly understandable: the career of George Dombai, and then that of his son, Nicholas, make it evident that they were then the leading members of the ‘county nobility’ in Körös. On the other hand, it is the same conspicuous that the leading position of Ladislás Rohfi, and the equally illustrious ranking of Ladislás Szencsei, coincide with their officeholding as viceban. By the late 1480s, however, it was clearly deputy-palatine Ladislás Hermanfi of Greben who had emerged as the leading figure within the local nobility. It is interesting to observe in this respect the position of the Bocskai brothers in 1474. At first sight, they seem to be pushed rather to

<sup>246</sup> I also count here the Kustyer by virtue of their attachment to the descendants of Isaac, and the Gereci, although, as we have seen above, the presence of the latter in Slavonia can only be dated to the fourteenth century with certainty.

the background; on closer observation, however, it appears that they are preceded by five “vicebanal” families (Dombai, Szencsei, Grebeni, Rohfi, Bikszádi), the acting deputy of ban Ernuszt (Nicholas Pozsegai), and the deputy prothonotary (Clement Paulovci); all officeholders, whereas the Bocskai would only join them a year later with viceban Peter. As for the figures of Peter Gudovci, they clearly indicate both the initial difficulties he is supposed to have faced in the beginning of his career (as a consequence of his origins), and the spectacular social rise he accomplished thereafter.

Below this group, fairly distinguishable, there comes another, represented by families such as the Gereci, Kopinci, Ervencei, Kamarcai, Jakószerdahelyi, Borotva, Raveni and Budor. No member of these families ever managed to climb into the first ranks of the scale, and, as we have seen in the chapters above, they differed in several regards from the families belonging to the first group: their service was mostly limited to *familiaritas*, and were for the most part excluded from the most important local offices (if they do appear as vicebans or prothonotaries, it is always exceptional).<sup>247</sup> Their members frequently turn up as designated royal men in ordinary cases, in the company of the petty nobility, and, accordingly, are at least as frequently titled simply *nobilis* as *egregius*; although by no means excluded from the workings of the royal grace, they normally do not appear in functions more specifically connected to the court (such as the various forms of royal *familiaritas*, for instance); their landed wealth is of more limited extension, and mostly confined to the county of Körös.

It happens sometimes, however, that a single individual from this group produces a social rise which results in his locking into the upper group, without exerting a lasting influence upon his kin. Thus, as mentioned above, Vitus Garázda of Kamarca certainly belonged to the ‘county nobility’ around 1500, and so did Ladislás Ervencei in the 1460s; if nothing else, their respective marriages would clearly prove it. Yet, apparently, neither the son of Vitus, nor the collateral relatives of the Ervencei brothers managed to maintain themselves within the ranks of the upper group. Very much the same happened in the case of Michael Tompa, whose “ingression” into the élite, again completed by a marriage, seems to have remained without consequence. It is in this respect that the exceptional success of Peter Gudovci and Stephen Prasovci is worth emphasising again, both of whom succeeded in transmitting their newly established prestige to the next generation(s).

It is, consequently, extremely difficult to demarcate clearly this intermediate group, especially from the undistinguished ranks of the petty nobility downwards. Again, the problem is very much the same as that with

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<sup>247</sup> Thus, in the case of Blaise Jakószerdahelyi, the briefness of his officeholding, but also its circumstances (the confusion surrounding the banate of John Vitovec); in the case of Nicholas Borotva and Ladislás Cirkvenai, the particular governmental position of Slavonia itself due to the queen’s presence there.

	1439 <sup>1</sup>	1471	1474	1478	1490	1492
Dombai	1		1	1		
Bocskai	7		8	4	2/4	2
Grebeni	4	2	3	2	1	1 <sup>2</sup>
Rohfi	5	1	4	7	8	3
Szencsei			2	3	5	6
Gudovci		8	14	9	3	7

- 1 In the case of the 1439 list, I have left out the Tallóci brothers, counting them among the barons, and bishop Demetrius Csupor. The list thus effectively starts with George Dombai. As for the other lists, I have only counted the nobility of Kőrös; consequently, the numbers given here may actually differ from the position within the complete list.
- 2 The place of Ladislás Hermanfi had by then been taken by his adopted son Balthasar Batthyány.

regard to the definition of the ‘parish gentry’ in England’: “for there is no very obvious place to draw the line at the bottom end of the scale.”<sup>248</sup> For, to take but one example, whereas Michael Berivojszentiváni stands out fairly clearly in terms of title and social connections in the 1470s, we have no means, other than the fact that they belonged to the same family, to distinguish his kinsmen in the other branch from the dozens of neighbouring families about which we know nothing beyond their mere existence. If we look at the list of 1474, we can observe there a second line of division, albeit very vaguely, below master Nicholas Kamarcai. Six among the persons listed there, thus, roughly the half, were active as *szolgabírák*, among them the very son of master Michael Raveni.<sup>249</sup> Yet we also find there not only a Raveni but also members of the Tompa of Horzova family, then sometimes already titled *egregius* and having a canon in the church of Zagreb. This second, intermediate group is thus much more fluid both horizontally and vertically than the other; besides those already enumerated, I would also count here, with all the necessary limitations, the Cirkvenai, Kristallóci 2, Latkfi, Megyericsei, Mindszenti, Musinai, Orros, Pálfi, Pataki, Stefekfi, Pan of Kravarina, Szász of Tamasovc, Frodnacher and Fodorovci families.

Even so, there will remain cases which defy all categorisation; the most conspicuous being that of the Bakolcai, of course. Originally a landed wealth amounting to almost two hundred tenant plots (when it becomes measurable), supposedly fairly illustrious origins, court connections, a fortification attested

<sup>248</sup> Given–Wilson, *English Nobility*, 72.

<sup>249</sup> Alongside Stephen Raveni, Benedict Posa of Tapolcaszentgyörgy (MNL OL, DF 231 436, here as *vicecomes*, but Stephen Posa is *szolgabíró*: DL 34 800, DL 100 645), Benedict Prezecsnafoi (DF 276 866, DL 94 537), Nicholas Puneck of Puneckovc (DF 277 009), Paul Botos of Doklina (DF 231 445, DL 34 882), John of Csersztvecszentpéter (DL 86 415, DF 218 995), and Matthias Iso of Palicsna (DL 33 695, DL 107 021).

in the early sixteenth century, and certainly the most outstanding marriage in our whole sample: all this would argue for including them in the upper category; yet the fact that they apparently played no significant role in the local political community, and not because they were occupied elsewhere, and that they had lost much landed wealth to other families in the course of the fifteenth century, warns us against treating their case as clearcut.

Now, there remains one question to be answered: can this noble élite, defined before all in terms of title, wealth and service, be regarded as a meaningful social phenomenon? Was it an élite in the real sense of the word, with clear contours, and, if yes, with regard to what? In legal sense it was certainly not, if we accept the approach of Stephen Werbőczy from the very end of the period examined here, according to which no differences existed within the ranks of the nobility in terms of liberty, privilege and exemption.<sup>250</sup> The fiction of legal equality was shaken by the law of 1498 and its corollary of 1500 (concerning the *barones banderiat*i and the *decempersone*), but below that level the theoretical equality of the nobility proved more persistent. Viewed in terms of landed wealth, the picture is considerably different. The families listed in the charter of 1510, plus Balthasar Batthyány and Balthasar Alapi, possessed together some 3000 inhabited tenant plots in the county of Körös alone; if we add their landed wealth outside the county, the total number would certainly be in excess of 5000. This is not much when compared to the immense wealth accumulated by duke Corvin, the Szapolyai brothers or the Geréb family;<sup>251</sup> nor does it look very high when compared to the more than 1600 sessions owned by duke Lawrence Ujlaki in the county of Körös alone.<sup>252</sup> If we consider, however, that all the remaining nobility in the county of Körös together possessed much less than that,<sup>253</sup> and add what we have seen above with regard to the possession of fortifications and market towns, the monopoly of certain offices, and the multiple ties created by marriage alliances, we can say that by the latter part of the period examined by the present book there existed a group of nobility which can indeed be termed as an élite. This élite consisted of a handful of families, most of which had belonged to the top layer of the nobility, either in Körös itself or in the county where they lived before their transfer to Slavonia, since at least the Angevin period, but frequently since the thirteenth century. For a succinct description of this élite group within the local nobility, it is worth citing the opinion of the English historian Simon

250 "all lords prelate, rectors of churches, barons, and other magnates, nobles and notables of this kingdom of Hungary, enjoy [...] by reason of their nobility and temporal goods one and the same prerogative of liberty, exemption and immunity; nor has any lord more nor any nobleman less liberty." Stephen Werbőczy, *The Customary Law of the Renowned Kingdom of Hungary in Three Parts*, ed. and transl. by János M. Bak, Péter Banyó, and Martyn Rady (Idyllwild, CA–Budapest: Charles Schlacks, Jr.–CEU, 2005), 47–49.

251 Engel, "Világi nagybirtok," 17.

252 Adamček–Kampuš, *Popisi*, 4.

253 This estimate is based on the figures of the same tax lists.



Payling, which is also apt for confirming our impression of a parallel development in the structures of the late medieval nobility in England and Hungary: “[...] the small group of leading county families, distinguished from their fellow gentry by their wealth and often by their antiquity, had a much more continuous corporate existence[...] Although individual families died out and others joined the ranks of the leading families, through marriage, service in the law, or otherwise, their corporate existence and prominence in county affairs was a constant affair [...]. Moreover, these families, although wealthier than their fellow leading gentry, were simply *primi inter pares*, they stood at the heads of their particular county élites, bearing the main burden of county administration and representation with other leading families.”<sup>254</sup> This élite was thus much smaller than the whole cluster of families which figure in this book at any given time; yet its formation and variations cannot be understood without having a more general view of the higher regions of the “parish nobility” in general.

That an “élite of wealth and prestige,” that is, a group of nobility superior in terms of landed wealth and social influence to the lower strata of the noble class existed before the second part of the fifteenth century as well is obvious; to what extent this group could be regarded as a political élite as well is very difficult to tell in the absence of sources. If we take a look at the families which I have identified above as belonging to the leading ranks of the nobility in Körös already in the first decade of the fifteenth century (Bikszádi, Borotva, Kustyer, Grebeni, Bocskai, Ost, Gorbonoki, Dombai, Dersfi, Kamarcai, Jakószerdahelyi, Ervencei, Megyericsei, Musinai, Fánecs, Berivojszentiváni, Csupor, Rohfi, Latkfi, Kapitánfi, Pekri, Szencsei, Kasztellánfi, Nelepec, Kristallóci 1, Bakolcai, Cirkvenai, Raveni, Gereci, Tamasovci, Garázda, Stefekfi), we can see a similar division among them to that observable roughly a hundred years later. With regard to the Angevin period, and up to around 1420, nine among them can be shown to have been connected to the court in the “traditional sense,” that is, either through a baronial office or through membership of the court itself (such as a court knight, for example): the Gorbonoki, Dersfi, Grebeni, Bocskai, Ost, Fánecs, Latkfi, Csupor, Pekri, Szencsei and Kasztellánfi families belong to this category. Seven among them (Dersfi, Grebeni, Bocskai, Csupor, Rohfi, Szencsei, Latkfi) boasted a castle already that time. Members of the same families also acted as the deputy of county ispáns either in Slavonia (Grebeni), or, the great majority among them, in various Hungarian counties. This latter category comprises also the Dombai, Musinai, Kapitánfi, Kasztellánfi, Nelepec, Gereci, Tamasovci and Garázda families, which, however, apparently had no connections to the court, while the Musinai and the Nelepec also owned a castle of their own. These families could thus be counted as constituting an élite of wealth and office, but certainly not a political community in the sense we can identify it a century later. That these families

254 Payling, *Political Society*, 10–11, 103–04.

were already interconnected by marriage alliances we can only surmise, but not prove. As for the remaining families, it is with regard partly to the supposed size of their landed wealth, and partly to the *magister* title that they are decorated with in the fourteenth century, that I regard them as belonging to a category distinguishable from the nobility below. It is certainly remarkable, however, that, with the possible exception of the Kamarcai, the Ervencei and the Megyericsei, they originally all came from the ranks of either the castle warriors (*várjobbágyok*) or the castle nobility. In a sense, they can be regarded as a social reservoir from which the “transitory members” of the noble élite in the strict sense were recruited before 1526.



## 4. CONCLUSION

In order to summarise the findings of the book, it seems convenient to return to the conclusions of Pál Engel with regard to the nobility of Ung around 1400, and contrast with it what I have discovered; this approach is justified in so far as Engel himself anticipated that the model he had elaborated would not necessarily be valid for the subsequent period, that is, for a socio-political structure commonly referred to as “corporate” (*rendi* in Hungarian) and supposedly characterised by the overwhelming influence of the estates.<sup>1</sup> Of course, not all points can directly be compared, for Engel refrained from investigating certain aspects (such as that of marriages), and, moreover, his inquiry comprised the entire nobility of a given county, whereas mine was limited to the upper section of it. Nevertheless, this approach can yield useful results, especially for similar research in the future.

To begin with, however, it is necessary to emphasise once more the difficulties one is bound to encounter in trying to establish the internal stratification of a noble society in case no tax lists from which the necessary figures of tenant plots could be obtained are available. The method of Engel, in fact, consisted in preparing at first a hierarchical list of landowners based on the number of plots owned, and then identifying internal categories in terms of distinguishing features, mainly connected to service and relationship to the court. In the case of the county of Körös, where no early tax lists have come down to us, no similar approach is possible; I have therefore adopted one based on title, and used the amount of landed wealth only as a supplementary means of determining social standing. The use of a honorific title (*egregius* as compared to *nobilis*), although by no means official and regular, was widespread and consequent enough to allow the identification of a group within the nobility which can be made the object of an investigation along several criteria. Although in most cases the connection between title and landed wealth is very obvious, in other cases it was only a research starting from the honorific title of a given individual which made it possible, working backwards, to discover the real amount of land a given family or kin group possessed. This, I think, is a very important point.

As for the origins, two things need to be repeated here; although both only concern the upper layer of the nobility in Körös who were active there by

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<sup>1</sup> Engel, *Ung megye*, 109–15.

the early fifteenth century and later, they do seem revealing nevertheless. The first is the dominant role of royal power in relocating noble land until the early fifteenth century; this observation is entirely in keeping with the findings of Engel in the county of Ung. Thereafter, however, two other factors, service and marriage came to the fore and remained decisive in the emergence of new families within the ranks of the leading nobility in Körös. This leads us to the second point, namely to the dominance of non-Slavonian families in providing a “recruitment area” for the nobility in Körös: that is, the regular arrival of already well-established families from other regions of Hungary, but also from abroad, and their rapid integration into the top layer of the local nobility through marriage. This point is unfortunately far from unproblematic, for the evaluation of the exact social position of a given individual or family at the time of their arrival to Körös is frequently hindered by the absence of parallel research on the regions of origin; the importance of horizontal mobility is beyond doubt, however. Vertical mobility, on the other hand, was rather sporadic, and in most cases only temporary; this fact puts into relief the achievement of those few who did manage to rise definitively into the top ranks of the nobility from below.

In the absence of exact numbers of tenant plots, and in view of the difficulties inherent to an approach based exclusively on this indicator of landed wealth, the use of fortifications and market towns as markers of status has proved rather helpful, although the problematic points are several here as well. Practically all the entities chosen on the basis of title can be shown to have possessed either a fortification or a market town, more frequently both, and several among them more than one of each, either constantly or at least temporarily. Since outside the group of families identified by title, very few other noble families had any fortification, and none had a market town, this line of demarcation seems a very clear one in trying to distinguish between different levels within the nobility. Moreover, the possession of castles and/or several *castella* very evidently correlated with the group of nobility regularly decorated with the *egregius* title, and is thus a useful indicator of a further break within the top group of the nobility generally characterised by the possession of fortifications and/or market towns. A further point to emphasise is the function of erecting or obtaining a fortification in indicating an “accomplished social rise”, and, inversely, the loss of it as a cause or symptom of social decline.

The examination of the ways and means of acquiring and losing landed wealth yielded several important conclusions. The most important, probably, concerns the role of royal authority in the transmission of noble wealth below the level of barons, or, rather, the lack of it. For, as we have seen, it was basically without royal intervention that noble wealth circulated among the local nobility, mainly through marriage and alienations of various forms. The exceptions, such as the cases of Nicholas Csupor or Andrew Kapitánfi, are all the more revelative. Another important conclusion is that, whereas alienations

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of land could profoundly alter the relations of wealth within the nobility, above a certain level these changes rarely proved irreversible; it was generally the families which had recently joined the top group of the nobility for whom the loss of property proved fatal. Others, such as Ladislás Hermanfi or Francis Nelepeci, were able to produce a comeback from a situation which would certainly have been hopeless for others.

In terms of service, some fairly clear patterns have emerged, but, here again, the picture is not as clear as in the Ung of Pál Engel. The clearest line of division seems to separate those families which never appear in subaltern positions such as royal men, elected jurors and *szolgabírák*, and only take on service for the king or the barons and magnates. This group comprises mostly those families which are also distinguished by the regular application of the *egregius* title and the possession of castles and/or several *castella*. But the relationship is not exclusive, and the status of an individual family can change a lot in the course of a long period of time. Since *familiaritas* itself could be conditioned by a great number of individual considerations, some of which were at least enumerated above, the exceptional cases are especially numerous here, and the underlying motivations very difficult to examine. A crucial point to emphasise is the decisive influence that the rich nobility in the county of Körös had built up over the appointment to the office of viceban from the middle of the fifteenth century; this influence had gradually turned into a virtual monopoly, to the point that the assumption of the office of viceban could be no more regarded as a "traditional" form of *familiaritas*.

As regards the relationship between the court and the nobility, the strict opposition between "court nobility" and "provincial nobility" is not a working model for the period after 1437. Certainly not in the sense that "the personal fortunes of individuals [were] best advanced by kings and by those around kings."<sup>2</sup> The king and the court did continue to matter, of course, but the kind of radical separation, in terms of both space and social prestige, of a so-called court nobility from the noble masses which would have remained isolated from the centre of power back in their homeland, is out of place. After the dissolution of the immense royal domain the favours available *only* through the court shrank as a matter of fact, and the competition for what was still available became ever more acute. Apart from the case of Nicholas Csúpor, we have no example of rapid social rise based on the royal favour alone, and even his rise involved no consequences for his kinsmen. On the other hand, new forms of participation in the workings of the royal court appeared, while others (such as court *familiaritas*) were transformed as the country came under increasing Ottoman pressure. Some of these court functions, especially under king Matthias, involved very real governmental powers; others, on the other

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2 Ralph A. Griffiths, "The King's Court during the Wars of the Roses. Continuities in an Age of Discontinuities," in *Princes, Patronage and the Nobility: the Court at the Beginning of the Modern Age*, ed. R. G. Asch and A. M. Birke (Oxford: University Press, 1991) 41.

hand, served merely to demonstrate the incumbent's closeness to the court and thus increase his prestige locally.

The analysis of marriages has generally confirmed the traditional picture of "like with like," that is, families of roughly the same social standing married with each other. We have encountered, however, some interesting exceptions to the rule, which are worth emphasising again. Firstly, in the top level of the local nobility there are more or less clear examples of upward marriages, with women who came from families we can label as aristocratic. However, with the possible exception of the Batthyány, none of these cases can be regarded as marking the definitive adoption of the given family into the ranks of the aristocracy; as the possession of castles, such a marriage is rather a mark which helps to distinguish them from the nobility below. Secondly, "downward" marriages in an otherwise socially constant series of alliances can sometimes indicate a clear decline in the history of a family (Kapitánfi). And, inversely, a marriage with a consort from a family above may be, like the construction or acquisition of a fortification, the sign of a successful "social climb," in a sense marking the end of the journey.

What could be learnt about the role of the Church in terms of career possibilities has confirmed the traditional view about the meagre importance of it in late medieval Hungary. On the one hand, we have seen that the situation was very similar to that reconstructed by Engel in Ung for an earlier period: it was generally the middling offices in the ecclesiastical hierarchy that were available for the leading nobility in the county of Körös. On the other hand, in the few cases when someone managed to make his way to the rank of prelates, church career apparently remained isolated and involved no consequences at all for the family of the cleric concerned.

And, finally, to the question of whether the group of families analysed from various standpoints in this book can be regarded as an élite within the nobility or not, the answer may seem rather elusive. What seems certain is that, in terms of title, landed wealth, service, officeholding and marriage alliances it is possible to identify at any given moment within the period between 1400 and 1526 two groups of unequal size within the upper ranks of the nobility, the contours of which, however, cannot be established with absolute certainty. Nor it is possible to draw the demarcation line below, for it is always a matter of personal decision of what to regard as a feature which allows to count someone as "outstanding" from the noble masses undistinguished in any respect. Classification, moreover, is hindered by intrafamilial differences, and by factors which cannot be measured at all on the basis of the source material we have.

One approach, however, and one following an English model, has proved fairly fruitful. By adopting the two-layer division elaborated with regard to the late medieval gentry, and the criteria upon which it was based, most of which are, indeed, similar to those used in the present book, it was possible to identify from the second half of the fifteenth century the formation of a family



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group which, by the turn of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, can be seen as constituting a fairly homogenous élite in terms of social and political dominance. Richest in land, monopolizing local offices, interconnected by marriage alliances, and with political horizons extending far over the borders of a single county, this group, although far from stable, stands out clearly from the local noble society. Recruitment to this group generally came from outside; some of the families, on the other hand, which have been identified as constituting a second, much more vaguely defined layer within the higher rank of the nobility, locked into the élite temporarily, either through office-holding, or through marriage, or through the acquisition of landed wealth. The number of the families constituting this group, which surely deserves the name of élite, was nearing twenty; it was thus considerably more than "two or three." But the county of Körös was one of the biggest, and its nobility, apparently, very numerous. To what extent the rather tentative observations offered here can be extended to other counties of medieval Hungary has yet to be tested.



## APPENDIXES

1. PERSONS LISTED AS REPRESENTATIVES OF THE  
SLAVONIAN NOBILITY

(italicized are those persons, in the county of Körös, from whose families vicebans or ispáns of Zagreb were appointed, and the [deputy] prothonotaries of Körös/Slavonia).

March 1439 DF 268 079	Jan. 1471 DF 252 051	May 1474 DF 252 056	Jan. 1478 DF 252 069	Jan. 1490 DF 252 108	March 1492 DF 287 346
Matko, Peter, John Tallóci	<i>Ladislav Roh of Décse</i>	<i>Nicholas Dombai</i>	<i>Nicholas Dombai</i>	<i>Ladislav Hermanfi deputy palatine</i>	<i>Balthasar Batthyány</i>
Demetrius Csupor bishop of Knin	<i>Ladislav Hermanfi of Greben</i>	<i>Ladislav Szcencsei</i>	<i>Ladislav Hermanfi of Greben</i>	<i>Peter Bocskai</i>	<i>Peter Bocskai</i>
<i>George Dombai</i>	<i>Peter Bikszádi</i>	<i>Ladislav Hermanfi of Greben</i>	<i>Ladislav Szcencsei</i>	<i>Peter Gudovci deputy prothonotary</i>	<i>Bernard Roh of Décse</i>
<i>Bartholomew Fáncs of Gordova</i>	<i>George Turóci</i>	<i>Ladislav, Stephen and John Roh of Décse</i>	<i>Peter Bocskai</i>	<i>Sigismund Bocskai</i>	<i>Peter Pogány</i>
<i>Ladislav and John Tót of Szomszédvár</i>	<i>Frank Fáncs of Gordova</i>	<i>Nicholas Pozsegai of Garignica</i>	<i>Nicholas Pozsegai of Garignica</i>	<i>Francis Szcencsei</i>	<i>Michael Kerhen</i>
<i>Peter Kasztellánfi</i>	<i>George Farkas of Ebres</i>	<i>Peter Bikszádi</i>	<i>Gregory Horváth of Gáj</i>	<i>Michael Kerhen</i>	<i>George Szcencsei</i>
<i>Herman Grebeni</i>	<i>Master Albert Pataki</i>	<i>Master Clement Paulovci</i>	<i>John Gyepüi</i>	<i>Francis Pekri</i>	<i>Peter Gudovci</i>
<i>Stephen, John and Ladislav Bicskele of Zelna</i>	<i>John Gyepüi</i>	<i>John and Sigismund Bocskai</i>	<i>Ladislav Bicskele of Zelna</i>	<i>Bernard Roh of Décse</i>	<i>George Kasztellánfi</i>
<i>Stephen and Ladislav Roh of Décse</i>	<i>Stephen, Ladislav and Nicholas Bicskele of Zelna</i>	<i>Master Albert Pataki</i>	<i>Ladislav, Stephen and John Roh of Décse</i>	<i>George Kapitánfi of Desnice</i>	<i>Nicholas Tulbert</i>
<i>Nicholas and George Bikszádi</i>	<i>Peter Konszakai</i>	<i>Stephen and Ladislav Bicskele of Zelna</i>	<i>Andrew Kapitánfi of Desnice</i>	<i>Mark Gereci</i>	<i>Albert Lónyai</i>

In all cases I give the archival number, for none of these charters is available in an up-to-date edition.

3 <i>Ladislás Bocskai</i>	Anthony Kopinci	<i>Gaspar Fánás of Gordova</i>	<i>Master Peter Gudovci</i>	Nicholas Orros of Orrosovc	<i>Nicholas Bocskai</i>
<i>Gaspar Csopor of Monoszló</i>	<i>Master Peter Gudovci</i>	Nicholas and Francis Pekri	<i>Ladislás and Stanislas Ervencei</i>	Nicholas Mikulasics of Palicsna	<i>Elias Bosnyák</i>
George Ludbregi	<i>Master Clement Paulovci</i>	Anthony Kopinci	Master John Vidfi of Korbova	Blaise Budor of Budrovc	<i>Ladislás Pekri</i>
Nicholas (2) and John Gereci	Gregory and George Sztubicaí	<i>Ladislás and Nicholas Ervencei</i>	<i>Nicholas Kamarcai</i>	Andrew Simonffy of Miletinc	Nicholas Orros
Majos Gereci	John Stefekovics of Szentandrás	<i>Master Peter Gudovci</i>	Anthony Kopinci	Demetrius Porkoláb of Miletinc	John Csersztveci
Frank, James and George Megyericeí	Ladislás of Pezerio	John Gyepüi	<i>Blaise Briga of Szerdahely</i>	Ladislás Huzarcz	Peter Gereci
<i>Stephen and Nicholas Kapitánfi of Desnice</i>	Paul Botos of Doklina	<i>Nicholas Borotva of Tersztenice</i>	Michael Szentiváni	George Ablancz of Mindszent	John Kernyak
Matthias and John Kustyer	Ladislás Bisztriceí	Mark Gereci	<i>Nicholas Fánás of Gordova</i>	Stephen Puchych of Rakonok	John Orehovci
John Progovci	George Ablancz	<i>Thomas Vitéz of Kamarca</i>	Blaise Budor of Budróc	George of Toyssoucz	
<i>Sigismund Kasztellánfi</i>	Paul Nespesai	Martin and Emeric Raveni	<i>Nicholas Pekri [son of Michael]</i>	George Plawychewych	
Sigismund of Kladusa	Fabian Sztubicaí	<i>Master Nicholas Kamarcai</i>	<i>Nicholas Pekri [son of Lawrence]</i>	Stephen Pozopchych	
Nicholas Palosaych of Klokoch	Stephen Lodomerycz of Adamovc	Benedict Pósa of Szentgyörgy	George and Gregory Sztubicaí	Simon Myhowlych	
	Benedict Swpan of Prezecsnaó	Nicholas Kerhevinai	<i>Nicholas Borotva of Tersztenice</i>		
	Stephen of Woynowcz	Stephen Ficsor of Farkasovc	John Kamarjai		

	John, parish priest of Kemlék	Benedict Swpan of Prezecsnaľ	George Laczovich of Laczovelcz		
	Clement of Sabnycza zenthawan	Nicholas and John Puneľ of Puneľovc	<i>John, Andrew and Thomas Vitéz of Kamarca</i>		
		Ladislav Bisztricei	John of Csersztvec-szentpéter		
		Ladislav of Pezerio	Ladislav Simonfi of Miletinc		
		Paul Magnus of Mateovc	Stanislav Butkaföldi		
		James and George Tompa of Horzova	Matthias Soo of Gatalóc		
		Paul Botos of Doklina	Emeric Zebenye of Zebenyanc		
		Stephen Pataki	<i>Peter Bikszádi</i>		
		Stephen Raveni	Nicholas Erdélyi of Hathko		
		John of Csersztvec-szentpéter	Peter Sáfár of Gatalóc		
		Matthias Iso of Palicsna	Janko of Csázmaľ		
			<i>Nicholas Vitéz of Kamarca</i>		
			<i>Peter Kerhen of Belosovc</i>		
			Stephen Peres of Gerec		

## 2. BANS, VICEBANS AND ISPÁNS OF KÖRÖS AND ZAGREB 1423–1526

The present table is only intended to facilitate the comprehension of the text, and is thus offered without references. It is based on my own research, and will make part of the general archontology of late medieval Hungary which is currently being prepared. Up to 1423 the reader is asked to refer to the often-cited book of Pál Engel (*Archontológia*, vol. I, 19–20).

BAN	VICEBAN, ISPÁN OF KÖRÖS	ISPÁN OF ZAGREB
HERMAN OF CILLI	Andrew Rohonci <i>Feb 14 – 27 Aug 1423</i>	George and Bartholomew
	Sigismund Hanchihar <i>1423 – 12 May 1431</i> Stephen Vitéz of Kamarca <i>1 July 1424 – 17 Jan 1427</i>	Matthew of Mácsó
	Ladislás Szencsei <i>19 March 1427 – 5 Aug 1435</i>	Stephen Kuhinger of Batina
MATKO and FRANK TALLÓCI	Peter Kasztellánfi of Szentlélek <i>14 May 1436 – 30 March 1440</i>	George Bikszádi
	Herman Grebeni <i>27 Jan 1439 – 7 March 1440</i>	Nicholas Gyepűi, then John Tót of Szomszédvár
	Akacius Csupor of Monoszló <i>14 Nov 1440 – 2 June 1441</i> viceban, ispán of Zagreb [together with Ladislás Bicskele of Zelna, only ispán]	
	Akacius Csupor of Monoszló <i>12 Oct 1442</i>	
	Nicholas Antimus of Tapsony <i>17, 24 July 1443</i>	Nicholas Gorbonoki and Dominic Miletinci
ULRICH and FREDERICK OF CILLI	Thomas Círáki of Szobocsina <i>17 July 1443 – 22 Jan 1446</i>	Ladislás Bicskele of Zelna
	George Bikszádi <i>8 Oct 1445 – 22 Jan 1446</i>	George Glaynar
	Caspar Kasztellánfi of Szentlélek <i>29 Apr 1447 – 17 Oct 1449</i>	
	Benedict Turóci <i>12 May 1447 – 17 Oct 1449</i>	
	John Vitovec of Greben <i>11 Apr 1450 – 11 Sept 1456</i>	George Ebresi
	Caspar Kasztellánfi and Benedict Turóci ?	
	Nicholas Dombai <i>4 March 1452 – 8 Jan 1453</i>	

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BAN		VICEBAN, ISPÁN OF KÖRÖS	ISPÁN OF ZAGREB
JOHN VITOVEC and NICHOLAS ÚJLAKI  [THOMAS SZÉKELY OF SZENTGYÖRGY]		Nicholas Kasztellánfi of Szentlélek 10 March 1458 – 23 Feb 1461	Nicholas Kasztellánfi and George Ebresi
		Blaise Briga of Jakószerdahely 10 March – 3 June 1458	
		Domozlaus of Atak 10 March – 22 Sept 1458	
		Ladislás Szencsei 5 Jan 1458 – 8 Jan 1464	
EMERIC SZAPOLYAI	NICHOLAS ÚJLAKI	Paul Perneszi 30 July 1464 – 15 June 1465	Stephen Bicskele of Zelna and Augustine Porkoláb
		Ladislás Roh of Dégse 30 July 1464 – [25 Jan] 1466	John Gyepűi
JOHN VITOVEC		Nicholas Kasztellánfi of Szentlélek 23 May – 18 Oct 1466	
		John Macedóniai 23 May – 14 June 1466	
JOHN VITOVEC	JOHN TUZ OF LAK	Akacius Kasztellánfi of Szentlélek 6 Feb 1467 – 20 Apr 1468	John Gyepűi and John of Palathya
Ladislás Hermanfi of Greben 20 March 1467 – 14 Feb 1470			
JOHN, BISHOP OF PÉCS		John Mindszenti 21 Jan 1469 – 14 Feb 1470	John Mindszenti and John of Polyacha
BLAISE MAGYAR		Ladislás Szencsei 19 Jan 1470 – 22 Feb 1471	
		Ladislás Veres of Szepes 19 Jan 1470 – 26 Sept 1471	
BLAISE MAGYAR	DAMIAN HORVÁT OF LITVA	Ladislás Roh of Dégse 31 May 1471 – 22 Nov 1473	Ladislás Roh and John Gyepűi
NICHOLAS ÚJLAKI		Nicholas Dombai 10 Feb 1472 – 22 Nov 1473	Nicholas Dombai and John Geszti
		John Geszti 10 Feb 1472 – 30 July 1473	



## 2. BANS, VICEBANS AND ISPÁNS OF KÖRÖS AND ZAGREB 1423–1526

BAN	VICEBAN, ISPÁN OF KÖRÖS	ISPÁN OF ZAGREB
JOHN ERNUSZT	Ladislás Hermanfi of Greben 3 Feb 1474 – 24 June 1475	Peter Bocskai, with interruptions
	Nicholas Pozsegai 3 Feb 1474 – before 6 May 1476	
	Peter Bocskai 7 July 1475 – before 6 May 1476	
PETER BOCSKAI		
LADISLAS EGERVÁRI	Peter Bocskai Oct 1476, 18 Sept 1479 – Sept 1482	
	Ladislás Szencsei and Andrew Kapitánfi of Desnice 10 Jan 1477 – 24 Jan 1479	
	Peter Bocskai and Andrew Kapitánfi of Desnice 18 Sept 1479 – 8 Apr 1482	
BLAISE MAGYAR	Ladislás Szencsei and Peter Bocskai 15 Sept – 16 Dec 1482	
MATTHIAS GERÉB OF VINGÁRT	Peter Bocskai and Ladislás Roh of Déce 29 Sept 1483 – 19 May 1484	
	Peter Bocskai and Michael Kerhen of Belosovc 22 March 1485 – 26 Oct 1489	Also ispáns of Zagreb
LADISLAS EGERVÁRI	Caspar Fáncs of Gordova and Oswald Polányi 15 Dec 1489 – 8 Sept 1490	Thereafter all the vicebans are simultaneously ispáns of Körös and Zagreb
	Oswald Polányi 6 Jan 1491 – 16 Dec 1492	
	Michael Kerhen and Oswald Polányi 20 Jan – 15 July 1493	
EMERIC DEREN- CSÉNYI and JOHN BOTH OF BAJNA	Bernard Roh of Déce and Louis Pekri 8 Aug – 24 Aug 1493	
LADISLAS KANIZSAI	Bernard Turóci and Louis Pekri 12 March 1494 – 18 Apr 1495	
JOHN CORVIN	Bernard Turóci and John Gyulai 14 May – 10 Dec 1495	
	John Gyulai and Stephen Bradač of Ladomerc 18 March – 30 Oct 1496	
	Balthasar Alapi and Marcinko Predrihói 9 Jan – 31 Dec 1497	
GEORGE KANIZSAI	George Kasztellánfi and John Mindszenti of Orehovc 20 March 1498 – 6 Jan 1499	

# APPENDIXES

JOHN CORVIN	Balthasar Alapi and Marcinko Predrihói 27 Dec 1498 – 25 Feb 1500	Thereafter all the vicebans are simultaneously ispáns of Körös and Zagreb
	Balthasar Alapi and Peter Bocskai 21 July 1500 – 3 May 1502	
	Balthasar Alapi and Bernard Turóci 13 Aug 1502 – 3 Nov 1504	
ANDREW BOTH OF BAJNA and MARK HORVÁTH OF KAMIČAC	Vitus Garázda of Kamarca and Elias Bosnyák of Businc 4 Feb 1505 – 20 Apr 1506	
	Louis Pekri and Francis Nelepeci of Dobrakucsá 8 Feb – 30 Dec 1507 [29 Dec 1510 – 3 Sept. 1511]	
GEORGE KANIZSAI and JOHN ERNUSZT	Balthasar Batthyány and Paul Čavlović of Gyurkovc 17 Nov 1508 – 27 Feb 1510	
EMERIC PERÉNYI	Balthasar Batthyány 14 Sept 1512 – 11 July 1513	
PETER BERISZLÓ	Balthasar Alapi 13 Dec 1513 – 11 Dec 1514	
	Balthasar Alapi and Balthasar Batthyány 17 July 1515 – 3 Jan 1518	
	Nicholas Dersfi of Szerdahely and Emeric Bradać of Ladomerc 4 Dec 1518 – 17 May 1520	
JOHN OF CORBAVIA	Paul Kerecsényi of Kányafölde 30 Jan 1522 – 29 Aug 1524	
FRANCIS BATTHYÁNY and JOHN TAHI		



### 3. GENEALOGICAL TREES

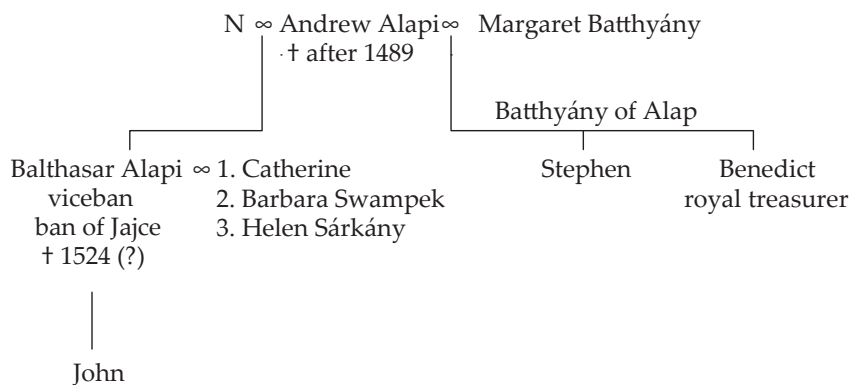
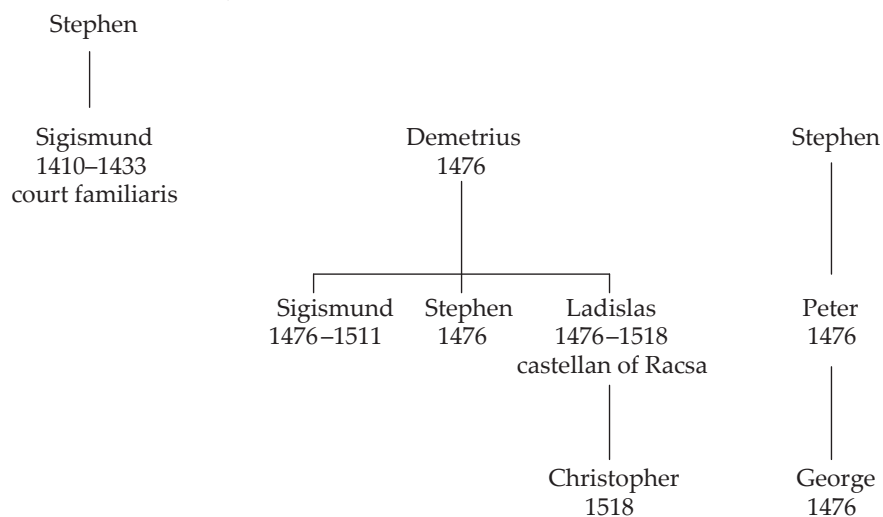
The genealogical trees are simplified as much as possible up to cca. 1400. For the period before, I generally have taken over the family trees prepared by Pál Engel (*Középkori Magyar Genalógia*, op. cit.)

The references can be found in the chapters dealing with the individual families. I only give references whenever the relevant piece of information cannot be found in the text.

I have prepared no family tree of the Budor of Budrovc and Kristallóci (1) families, for those made by Géza Pálffy (*Budróci Budor* op. cit.) and Pál Engel respectively are in no need of correction. Among the other families treated in full biographies, I have omitted Nicholas Pozsegai, for practical reasons (his being a nuclear family, identifying its members is easy); but also the Garázda, for the numerous fragments could not be linked together to give at least a probable result.

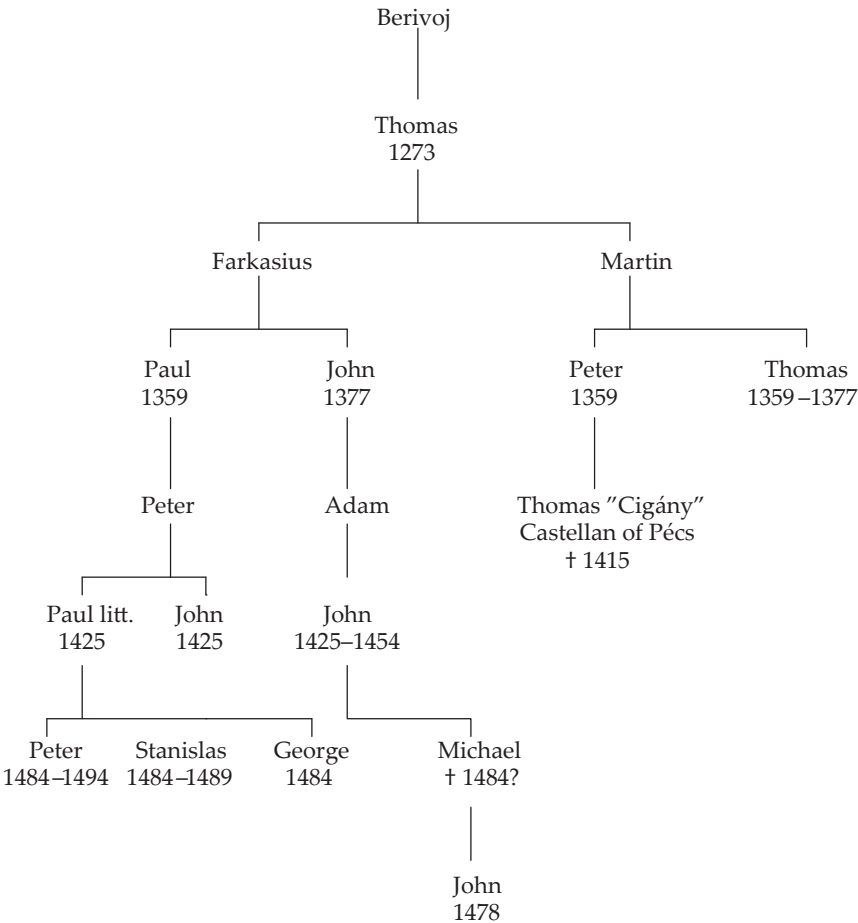
I only indicate females in case the husband is known, for otherwise they add no new information from the point of view of social history. I also have omitted males who died in infancy or about whom nothing is known but their names.

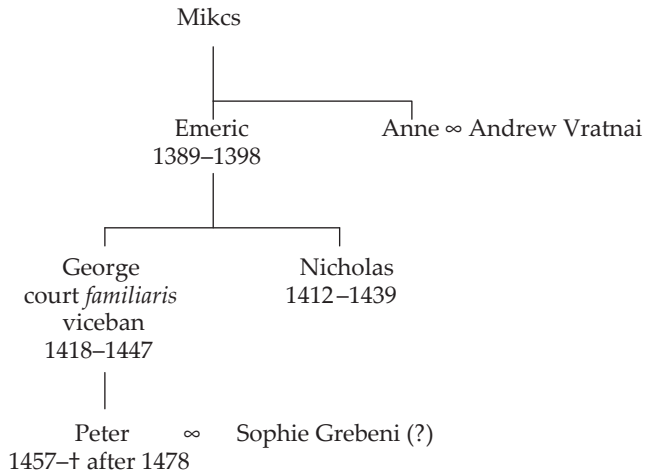
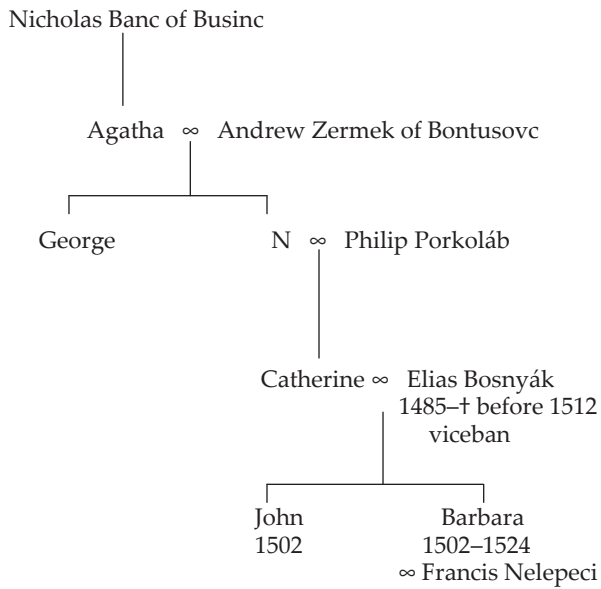


**ALAPI family****BAKOLCAI family**

Fragm.: Magdalena ∞ duke Lawrence Újlaki

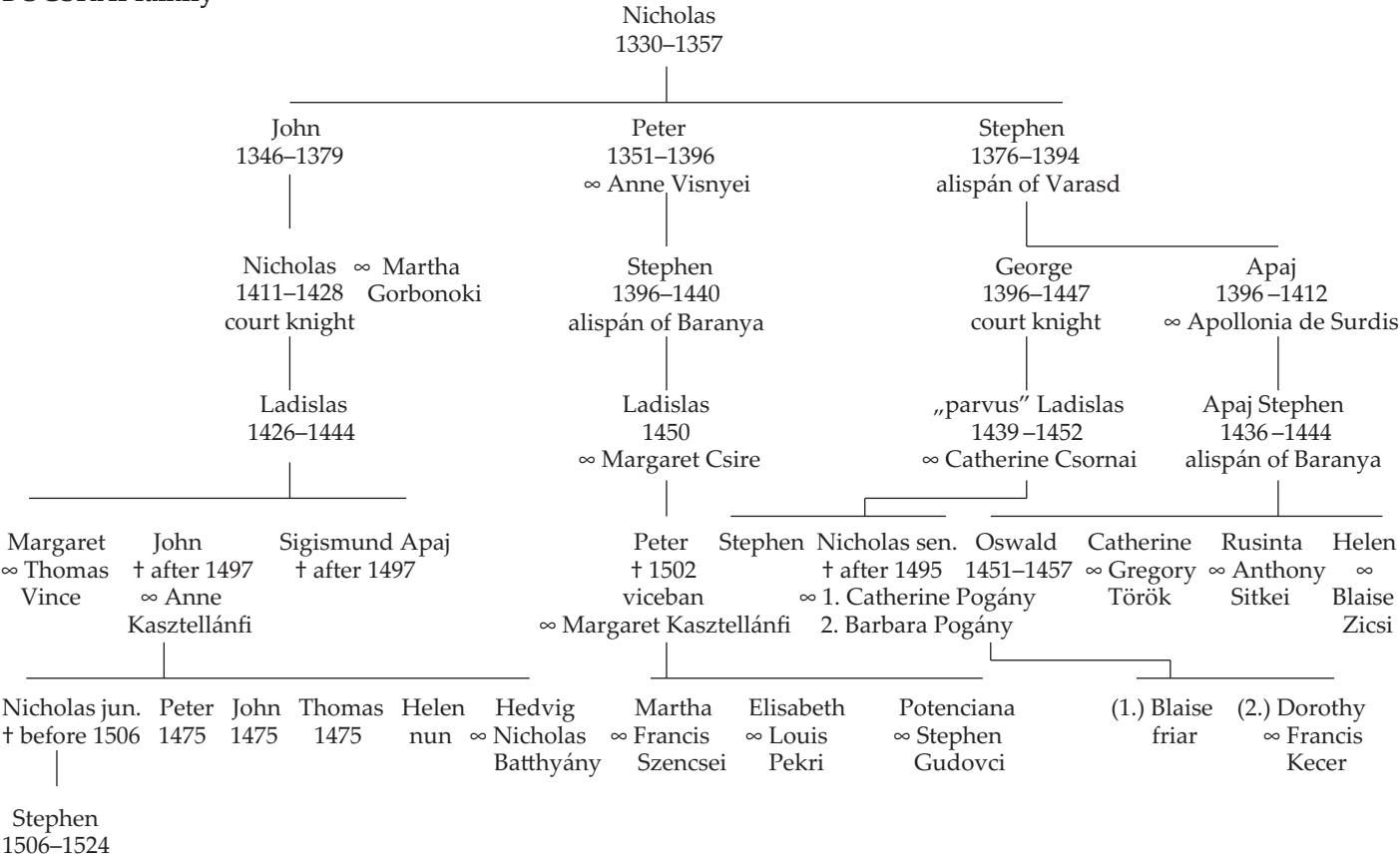
**BERIVOJSZENTIVÁNI family**



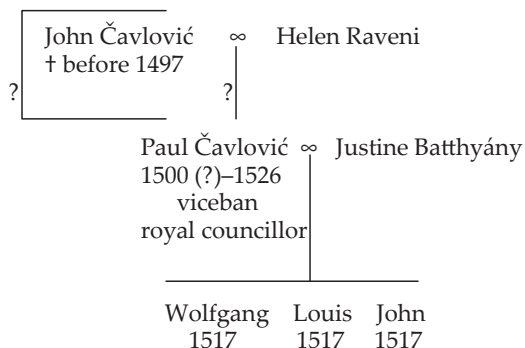
**BIKSZÁDI family****BOSNYÁK family**



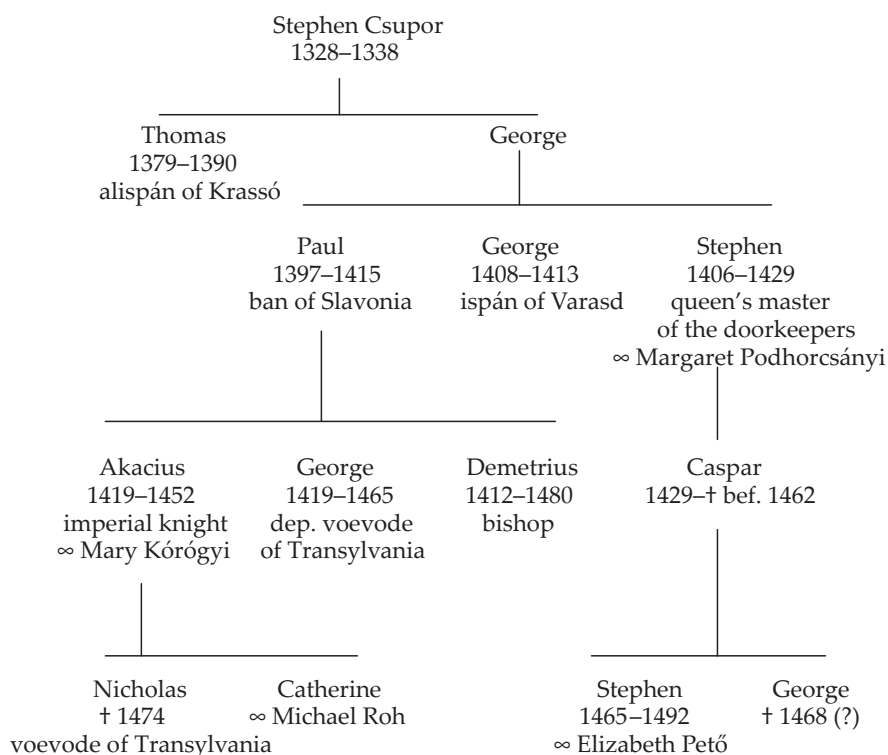
BOCSKAI family



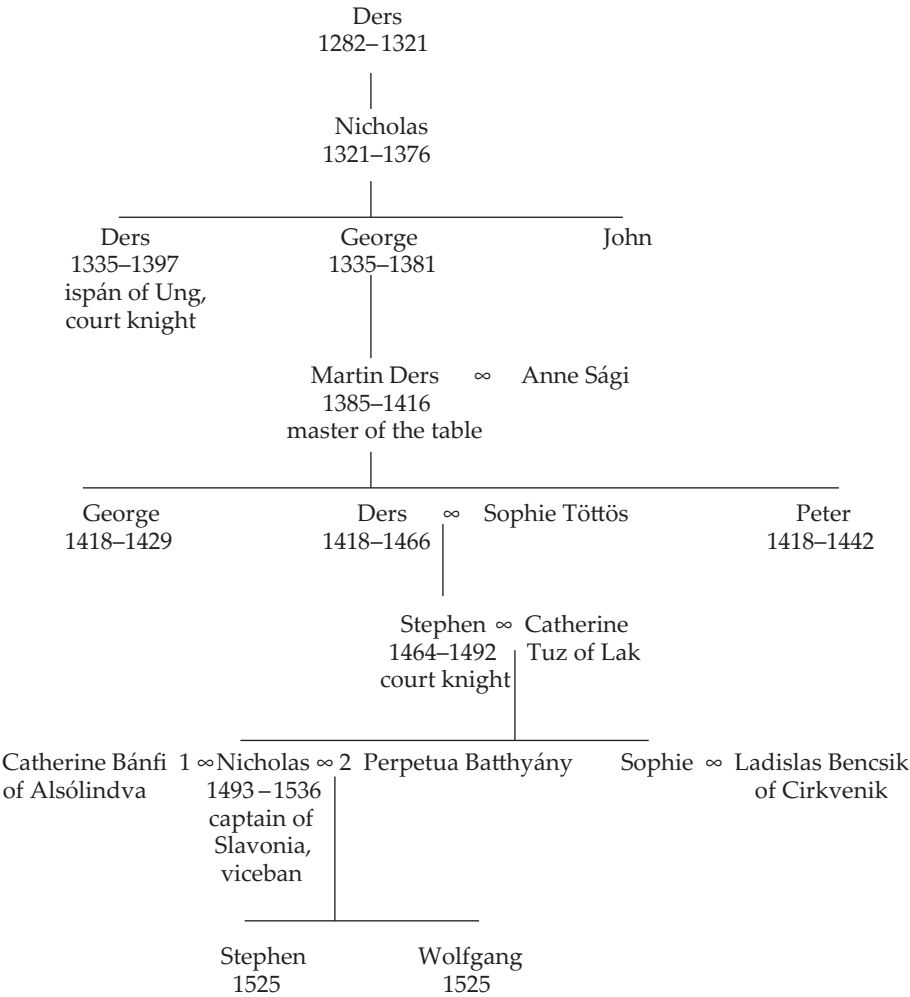
## ČAVLOVIĆ family



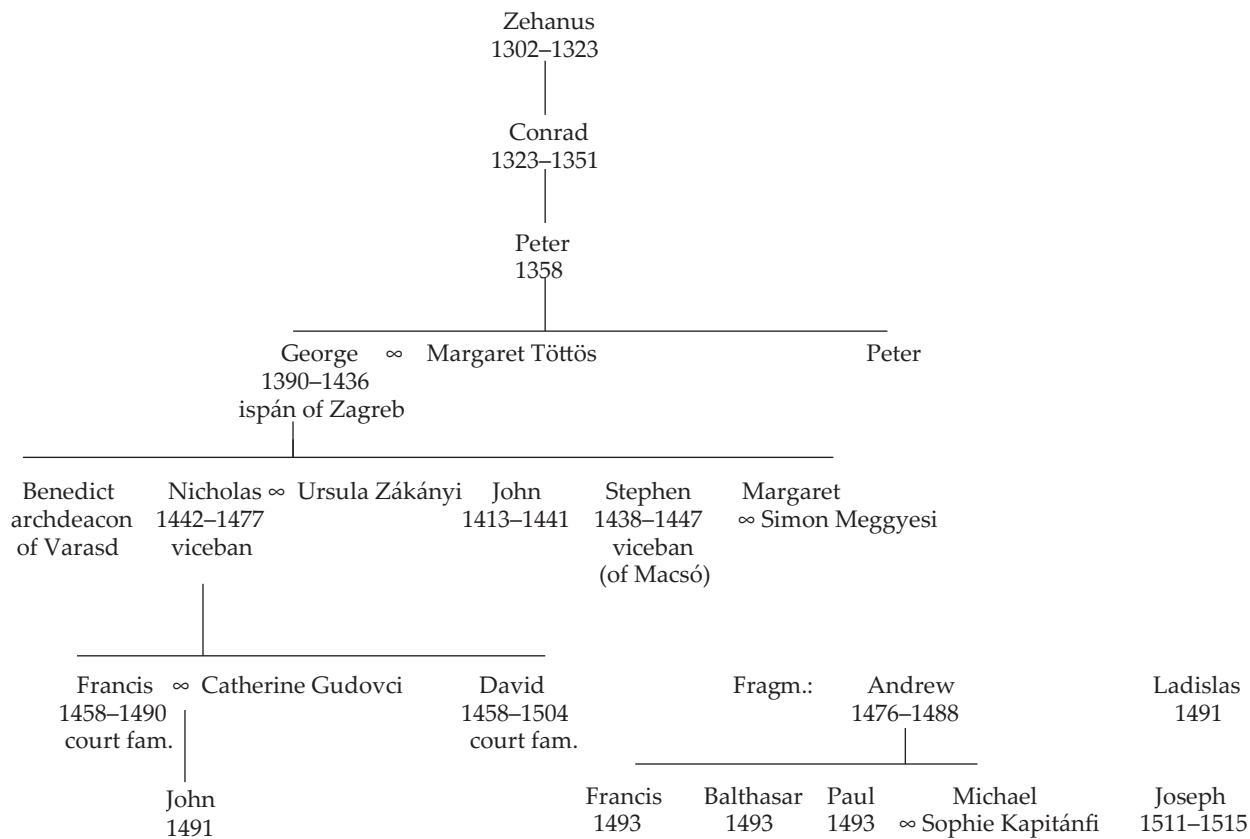
## CSUPOR family



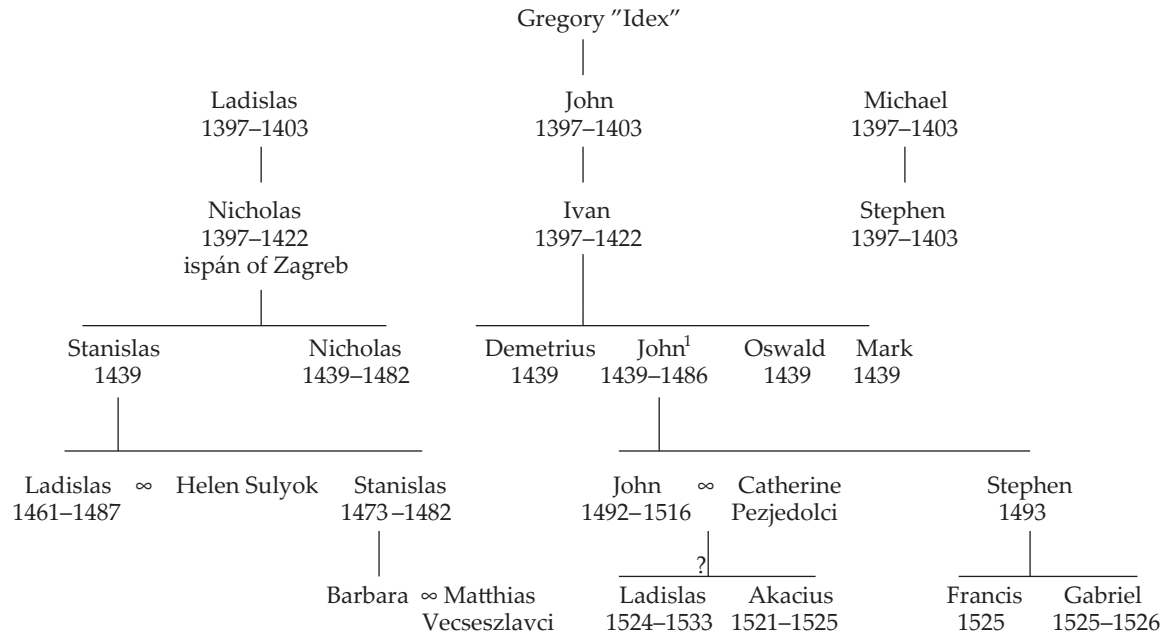
DERSFI family



## DOMBAI family

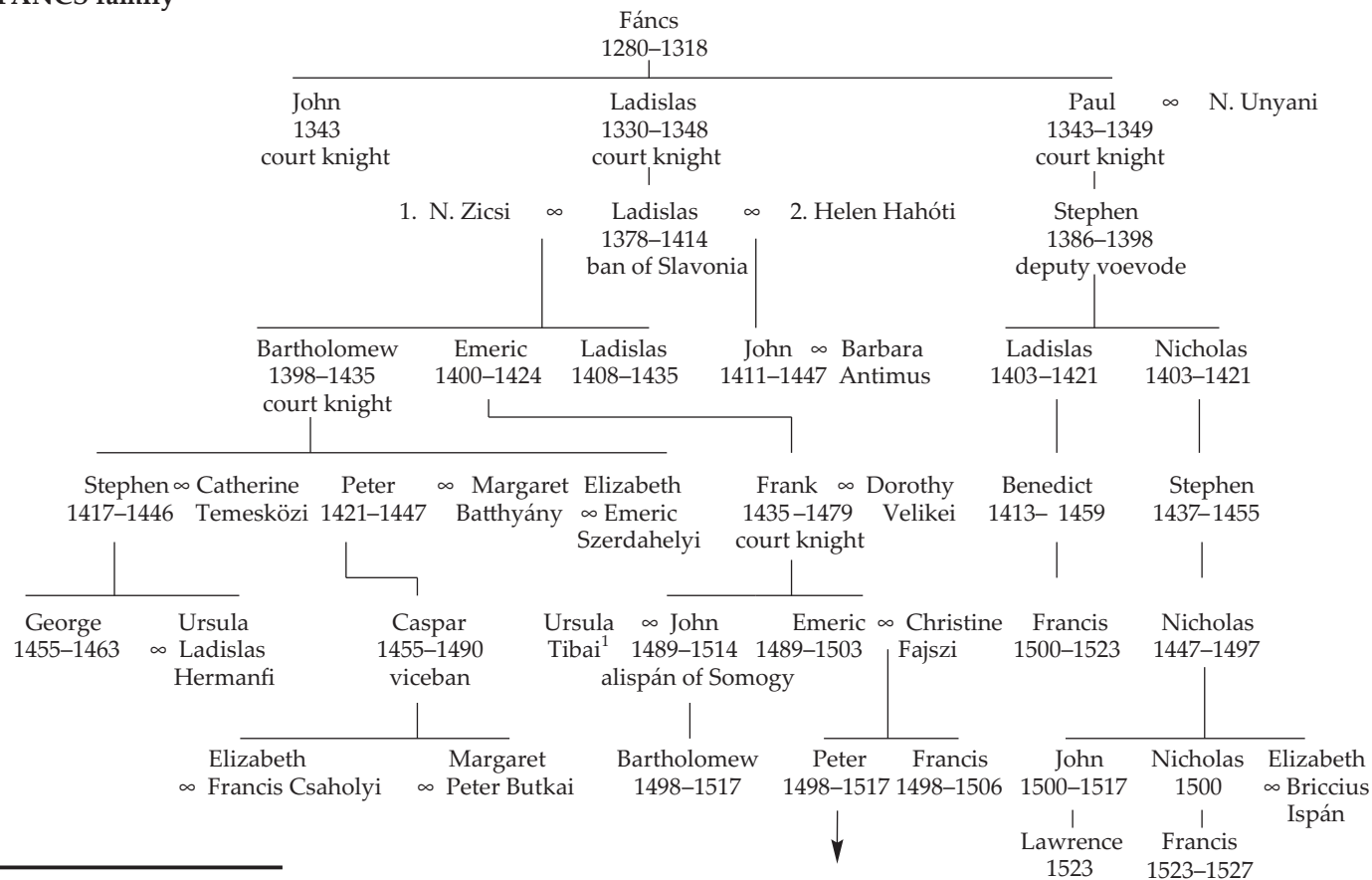


ERVENCEI family



<sup>1</sup> In fact, the John who turns up in 1486 may already be identical with the other John. We have no means to distinguish between them.

## FÁNCs family

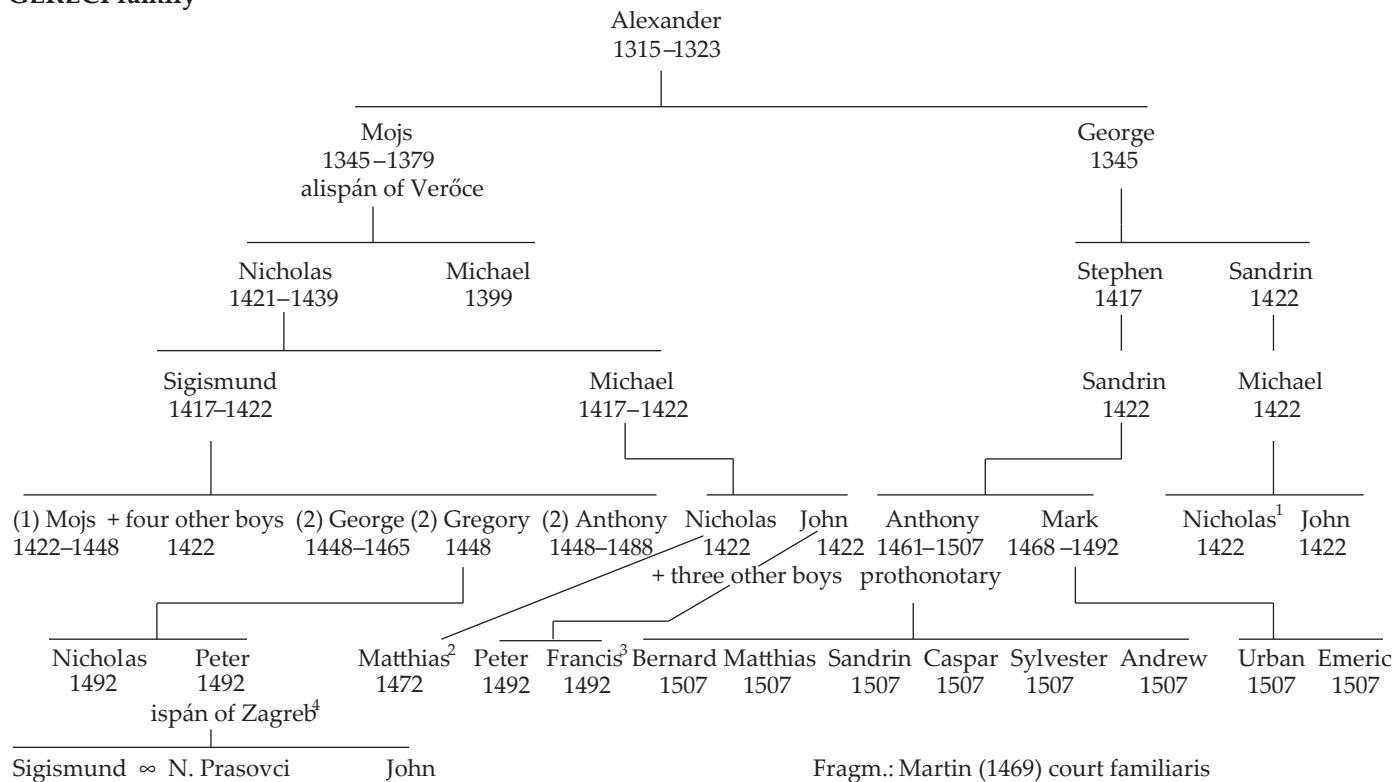



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1 MNL OL, DF 224 101.



## GERECI family



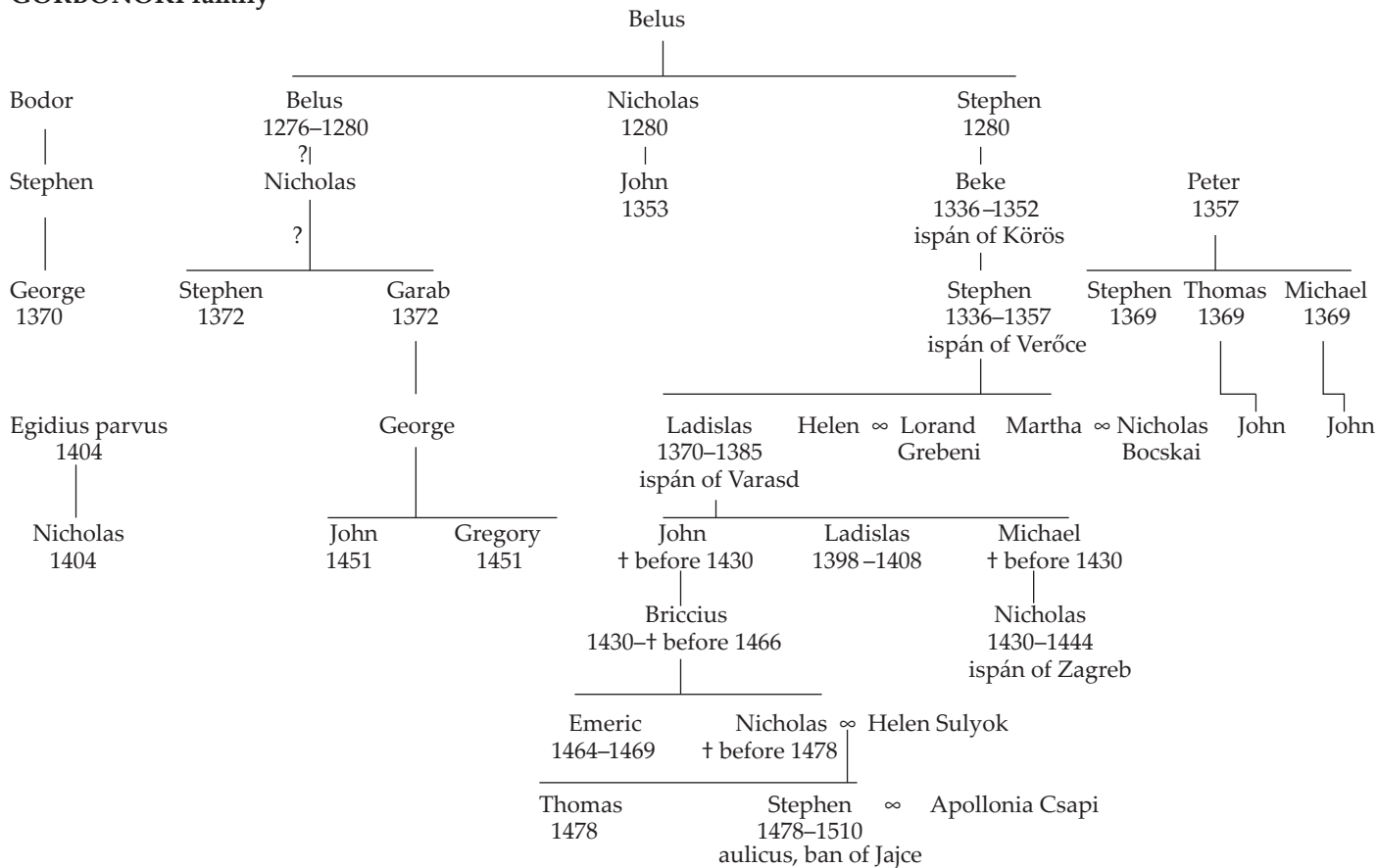
1 Distinction between the three Nicholas is impossible.

2 This Matthias can equally be the son of the other Nicholas.

3 It is again possible that they were in fact the sons of the other John.

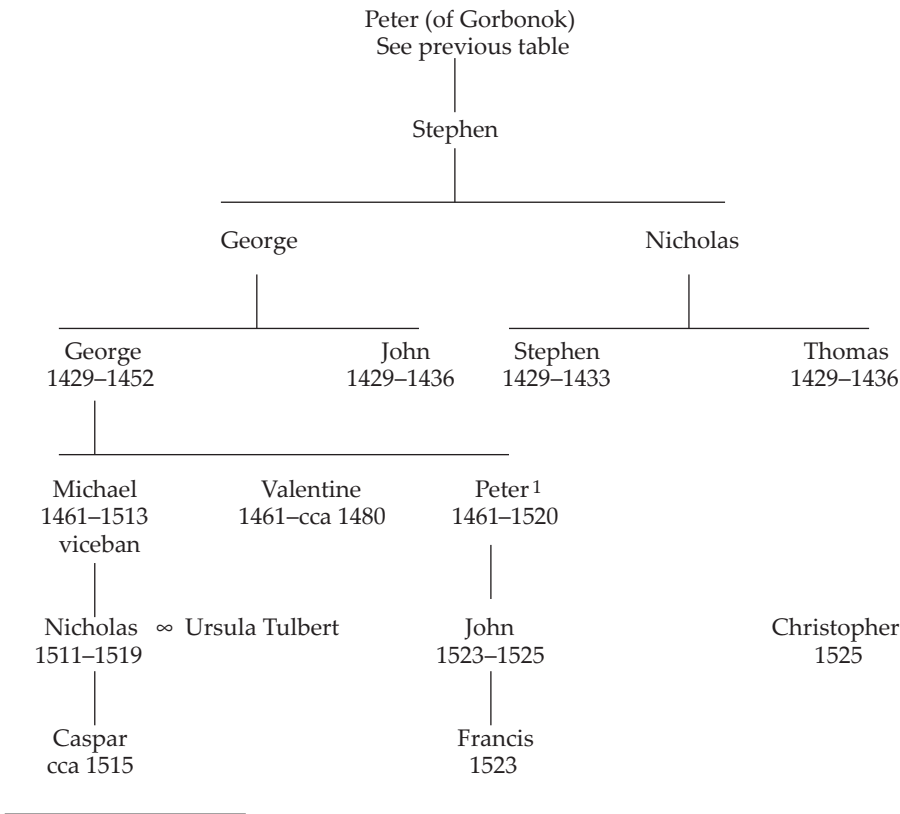
4 The other Peter (son of John) is also a possible candidate as ispán of Zagreb.

## GORBONOKI family



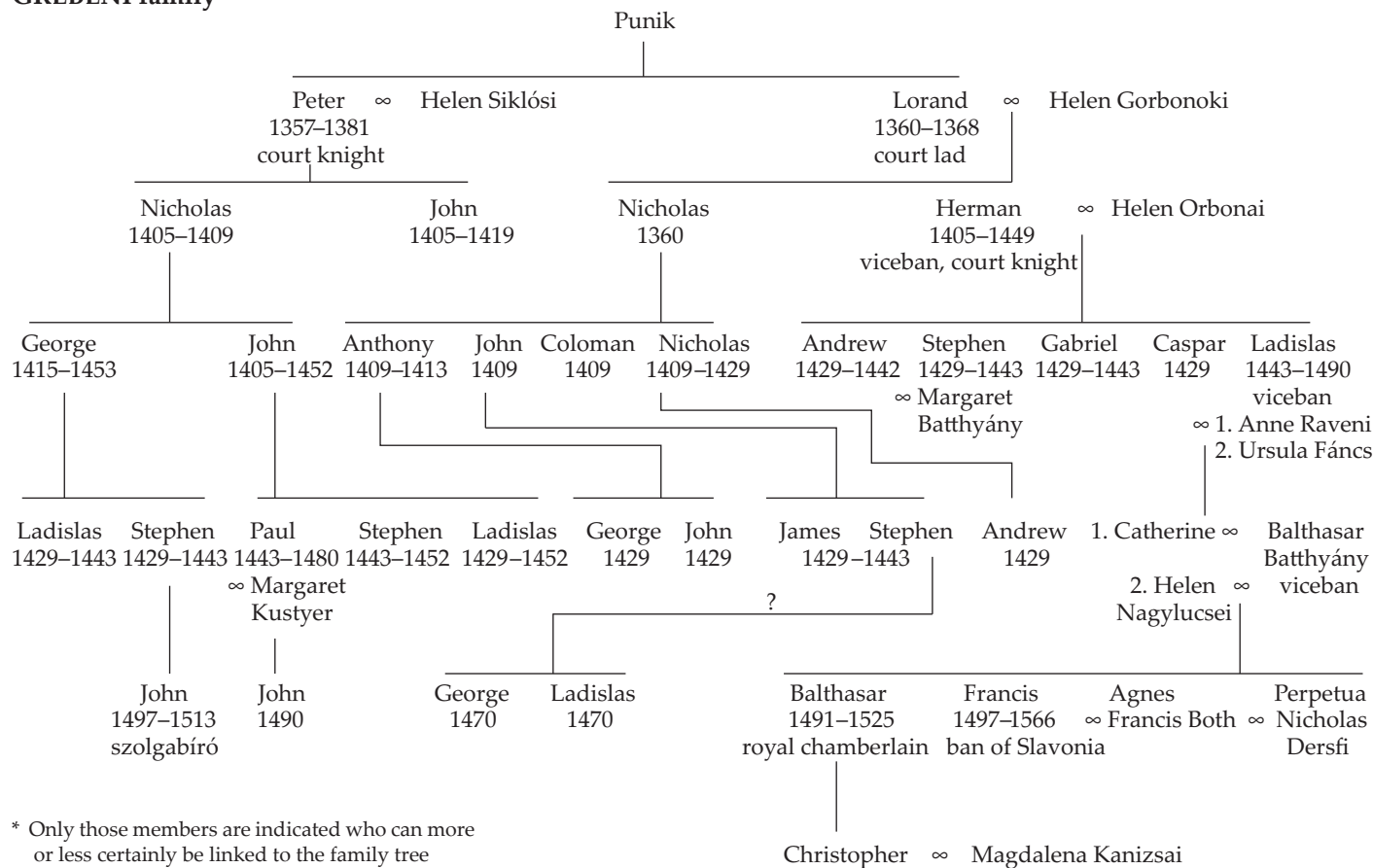
3. GENEALOGICAL TREES

KERHEN of BELOSOVC family

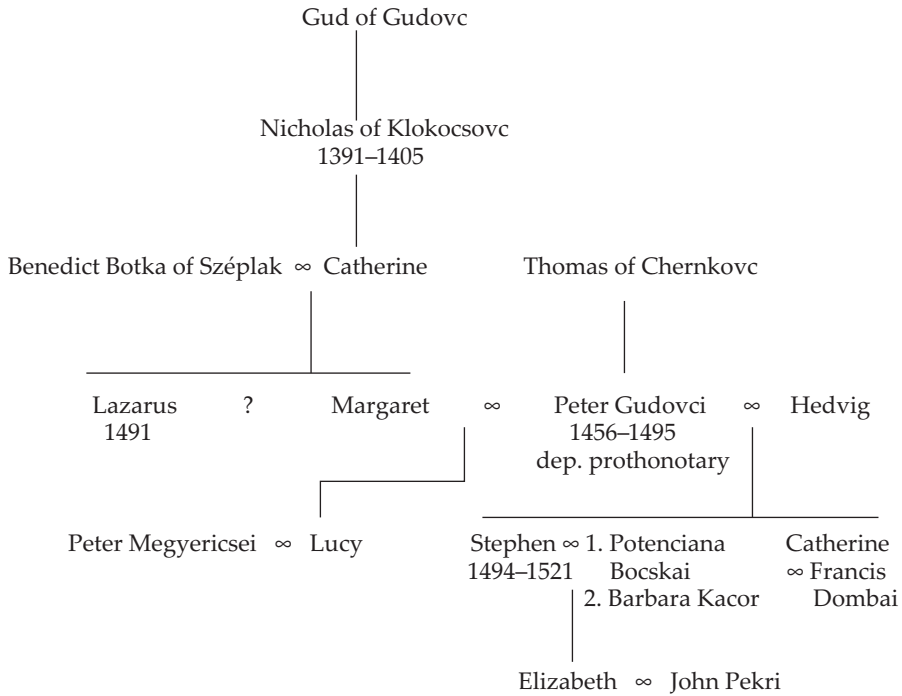
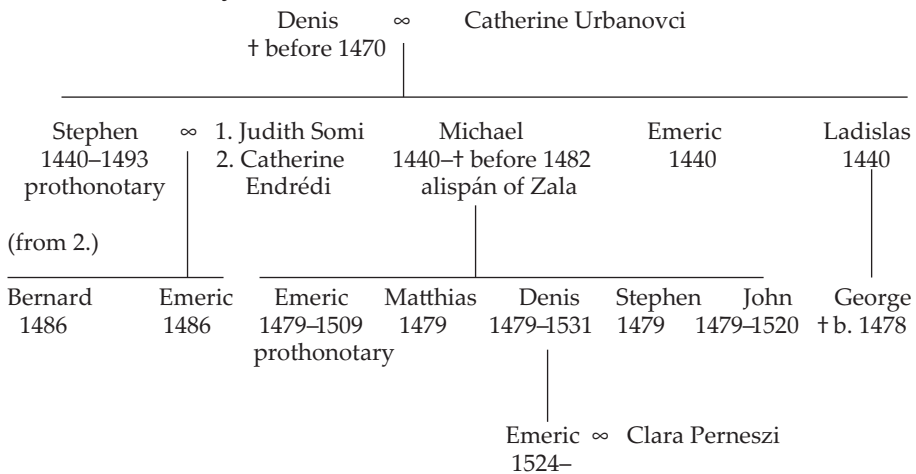


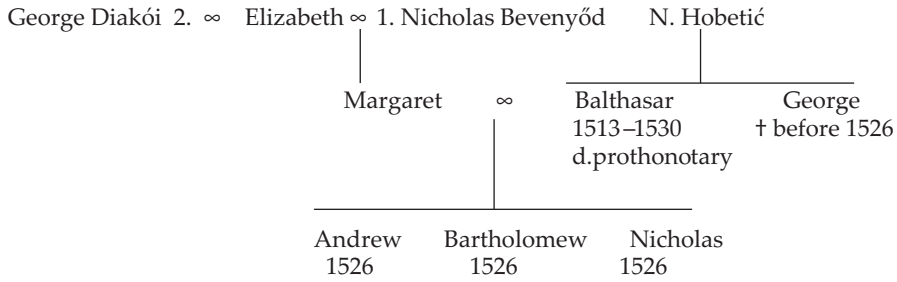
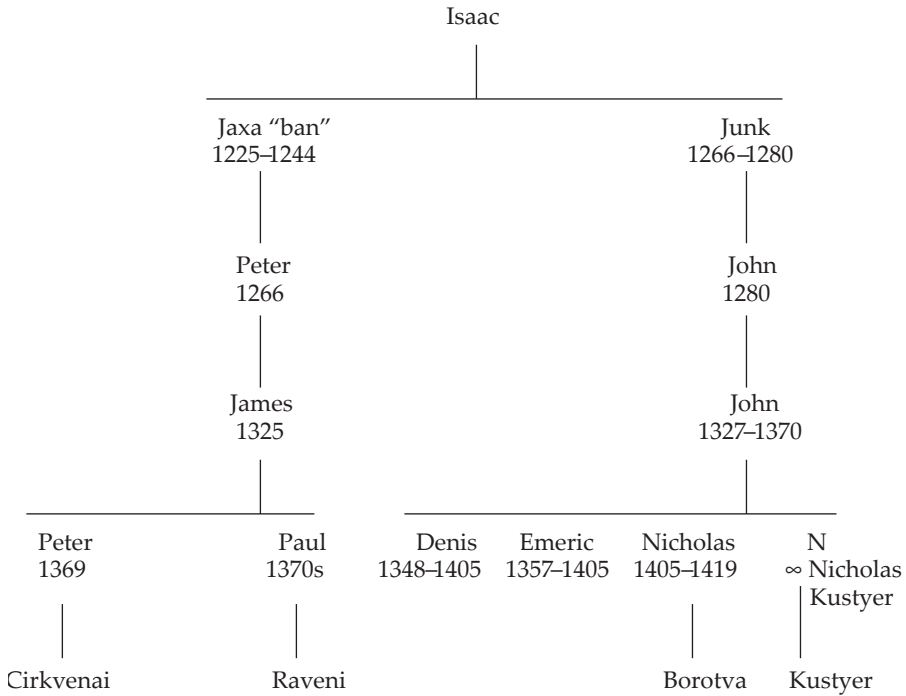
<sup>1</sup> He was certainly not the son of John, as on the table published by Borsa (“Belosovci Kerhen család”)

## GREBENI family\*



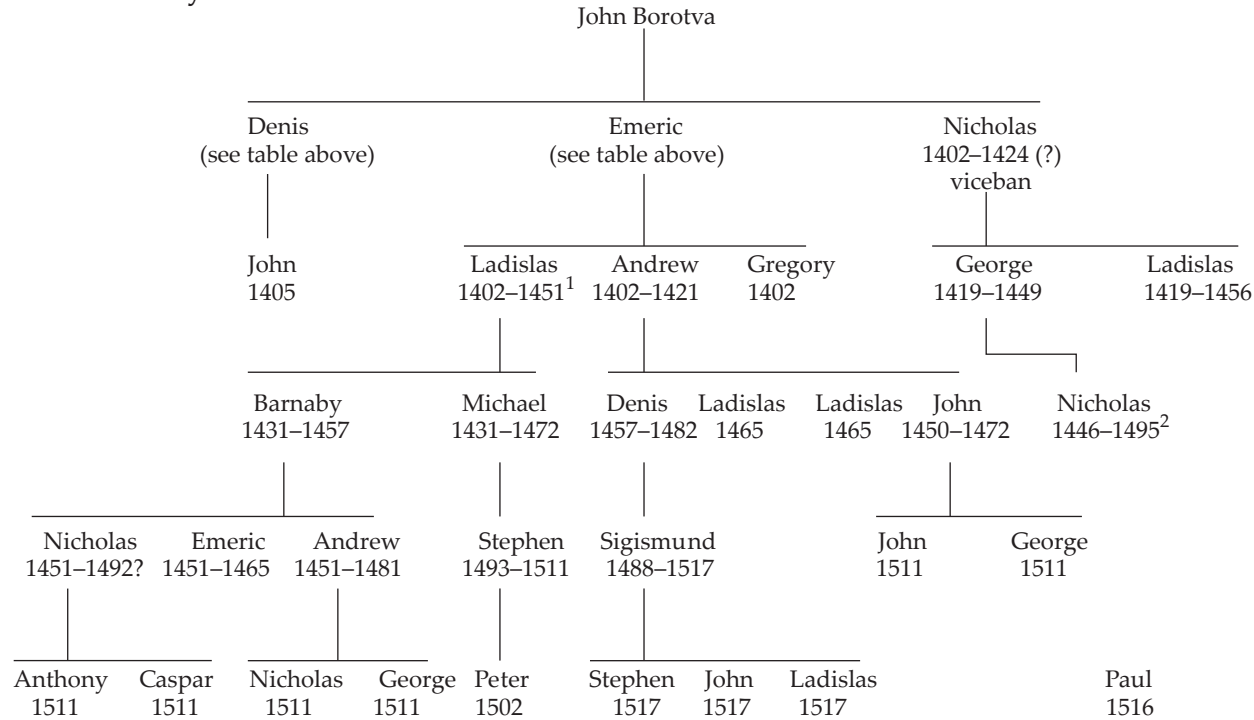
\* Only those members are indicated who can more or less certainly be linked to the family tree

**GUDOVCI family****HÁSSÁGYI family**

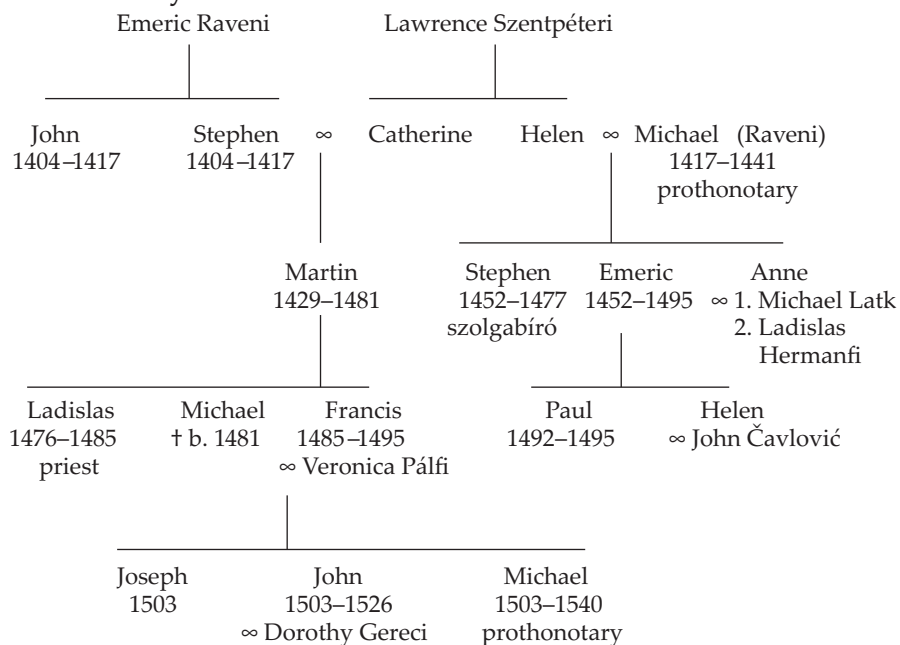
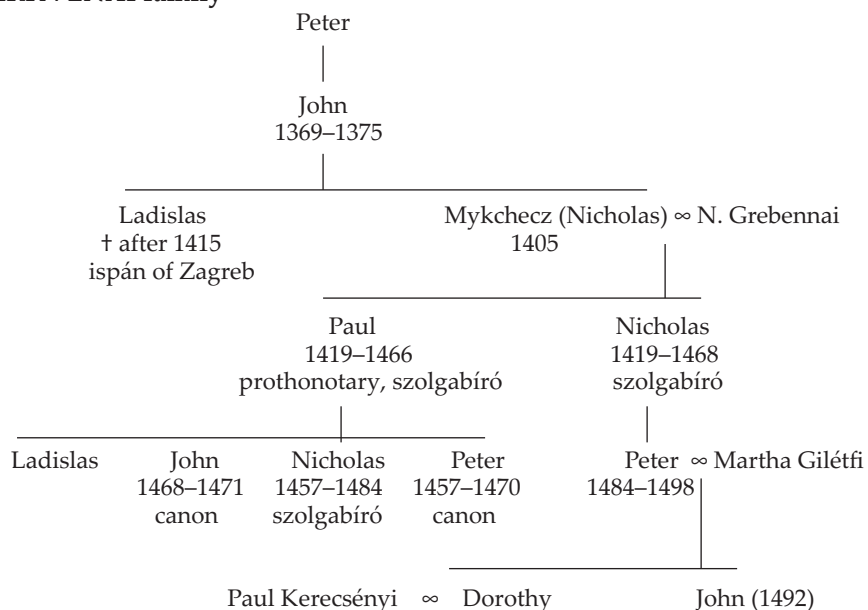
**HOBETIC family****The Descendants of ISAAC**

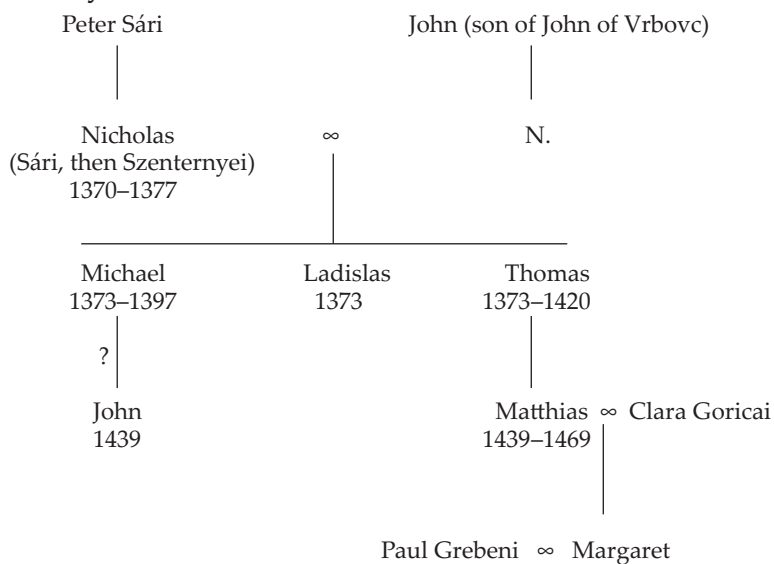
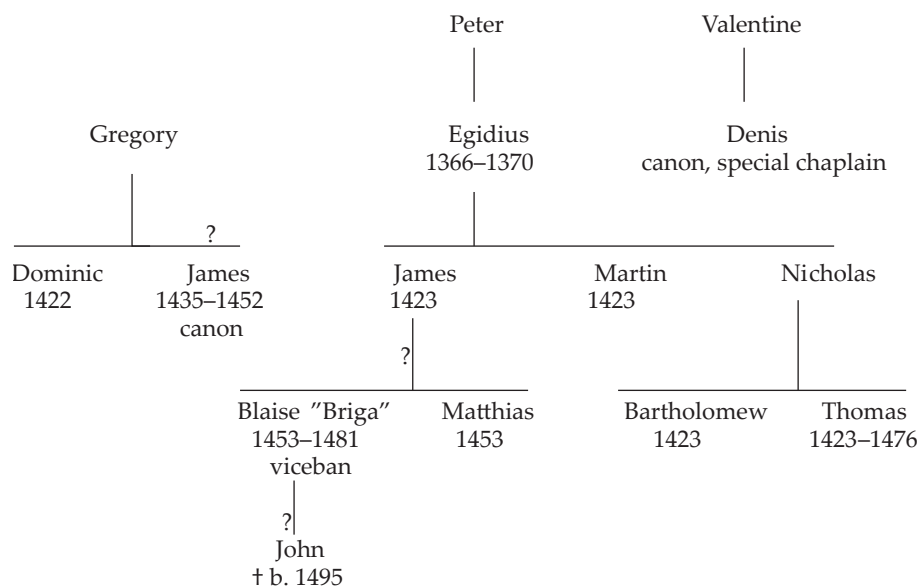


**BOROTVA family**

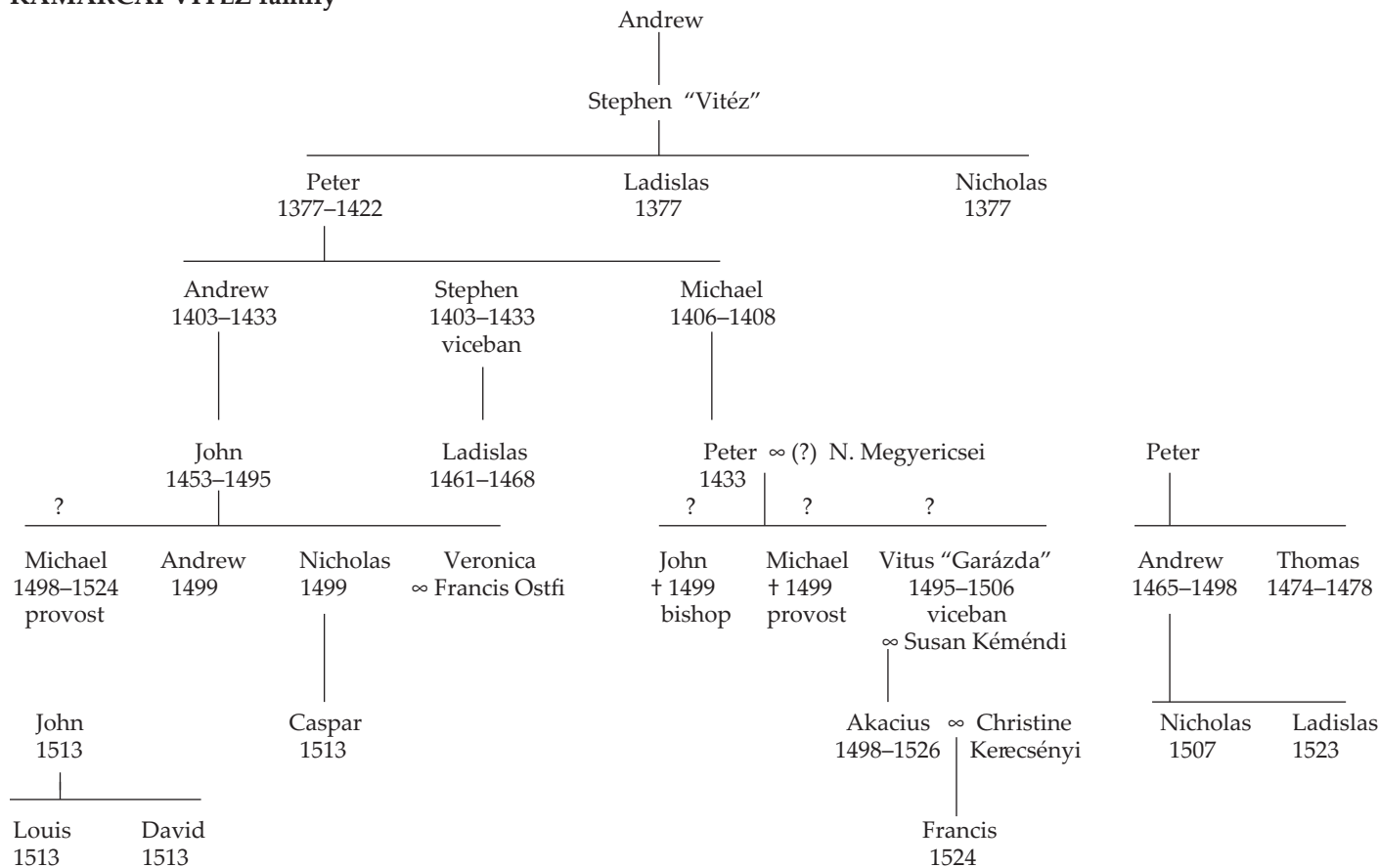


1 This Ladislas is impossible to be distinguished from either the Ladislas son of Nicholas, or from his nephews, the sons of Andrew.  
 2 The same applies to the two Nicholas; the dates are accordingly uncertain.

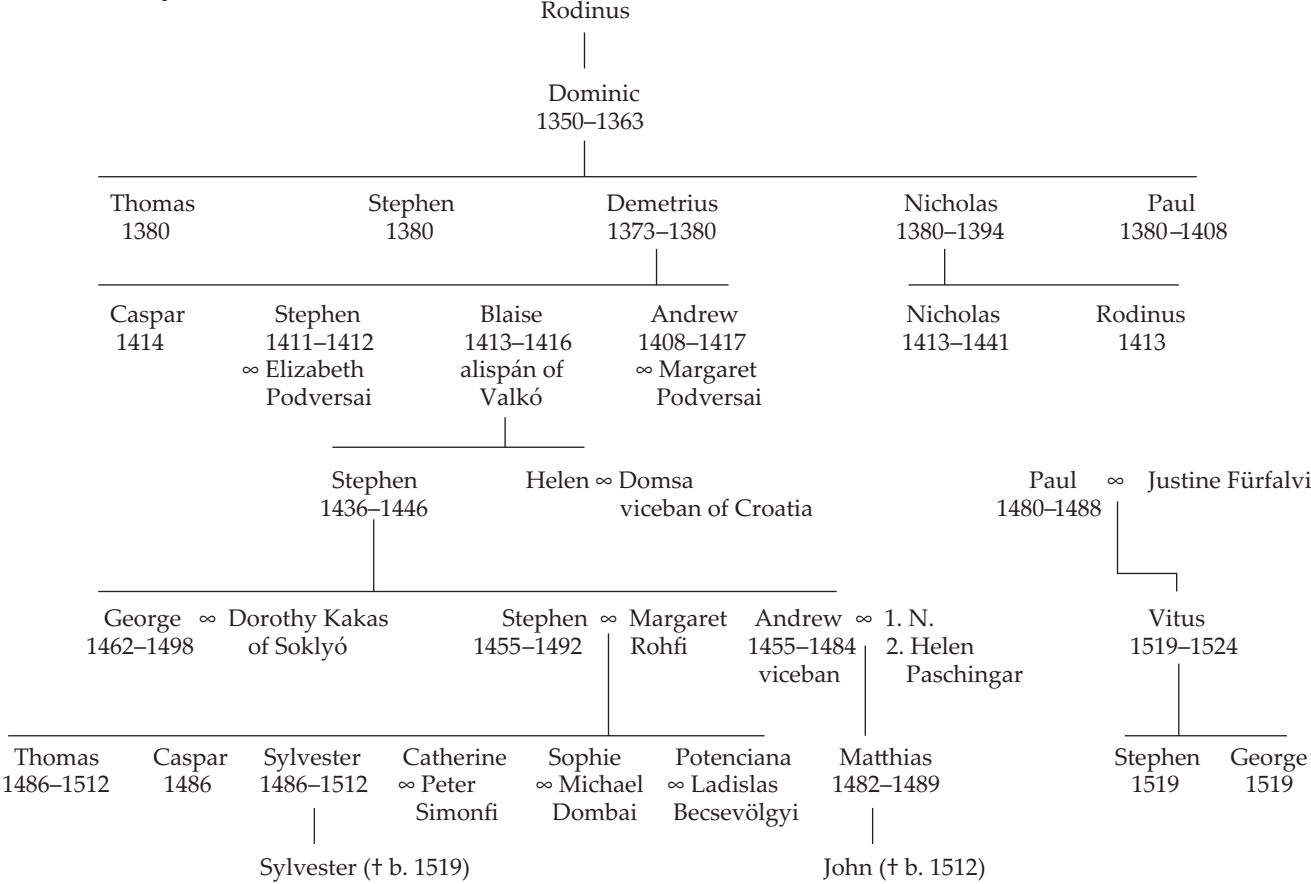
**RAVENI family****CIRKVENAI family**

**KUSTYER family****JAKÓSZERDAHELYI family**

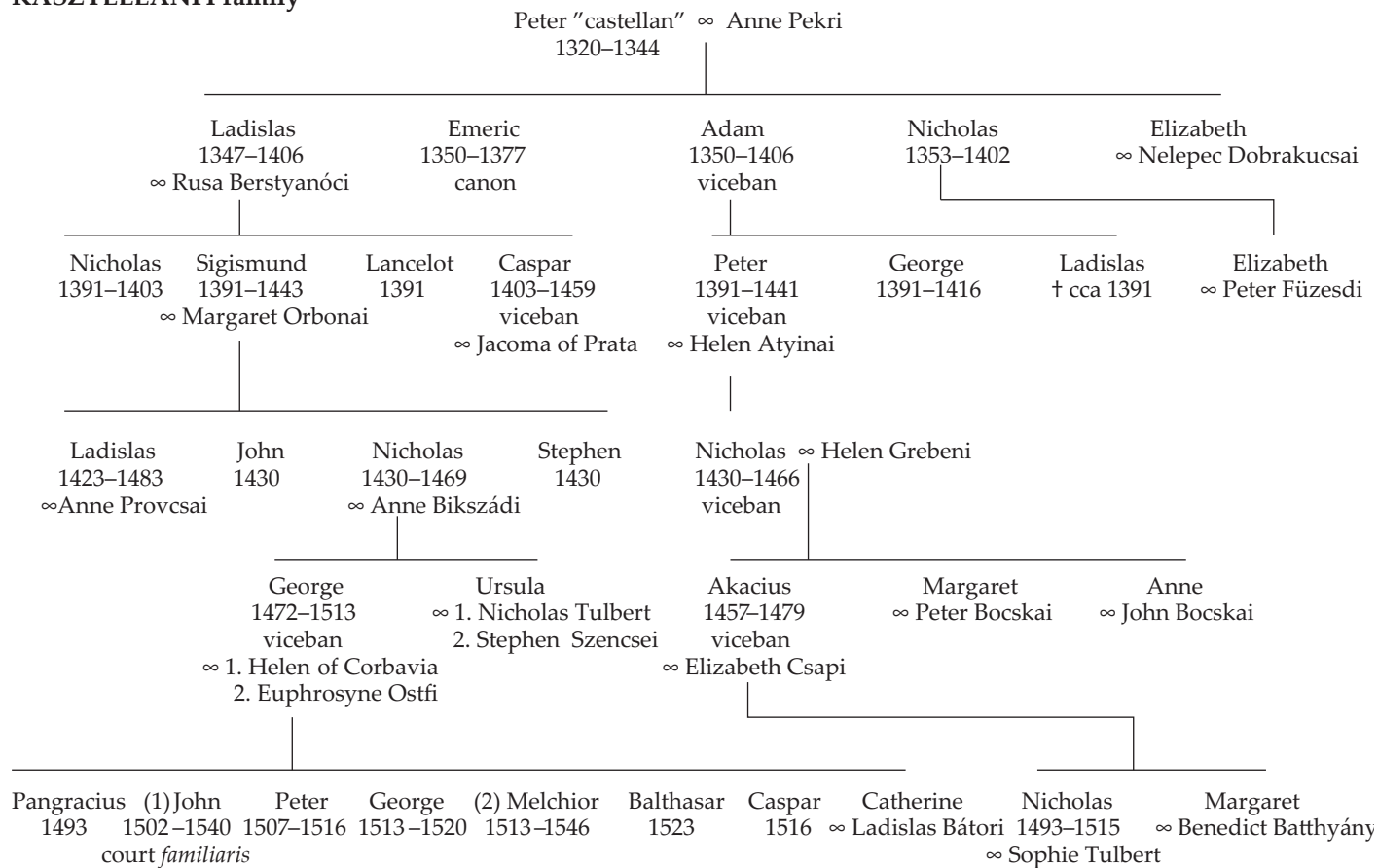
# KAMARCAI VITÉZ family



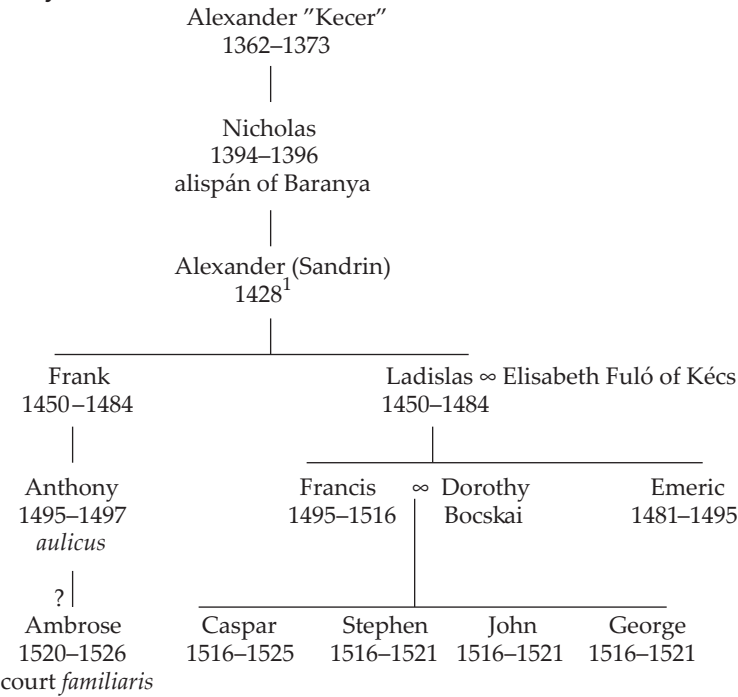
KAPITÁNFI family



## KASZTELLÁNFI family



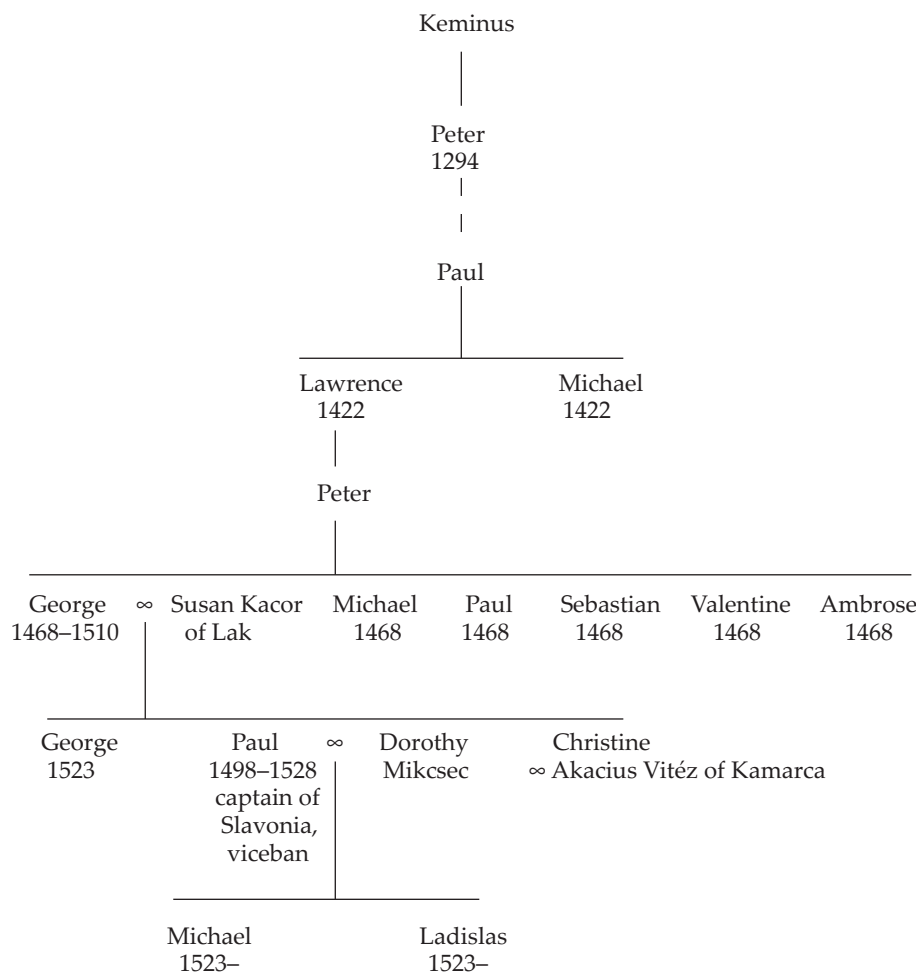
KECER family



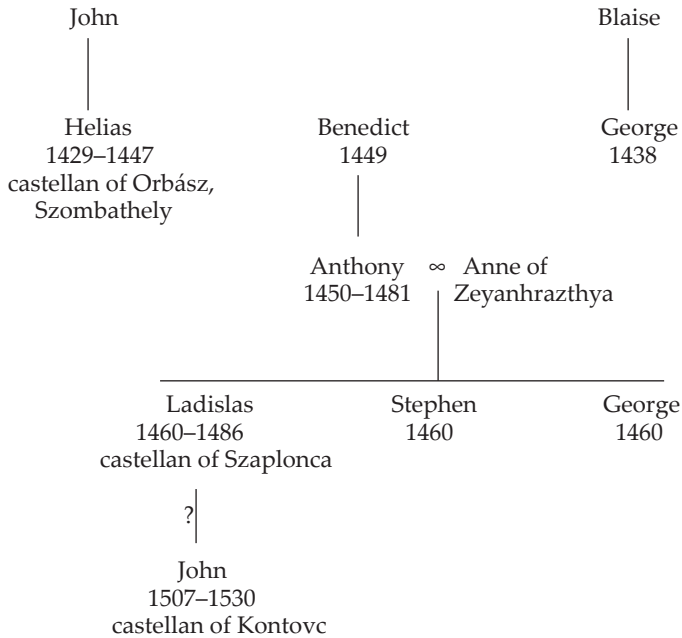
1 DL 12001



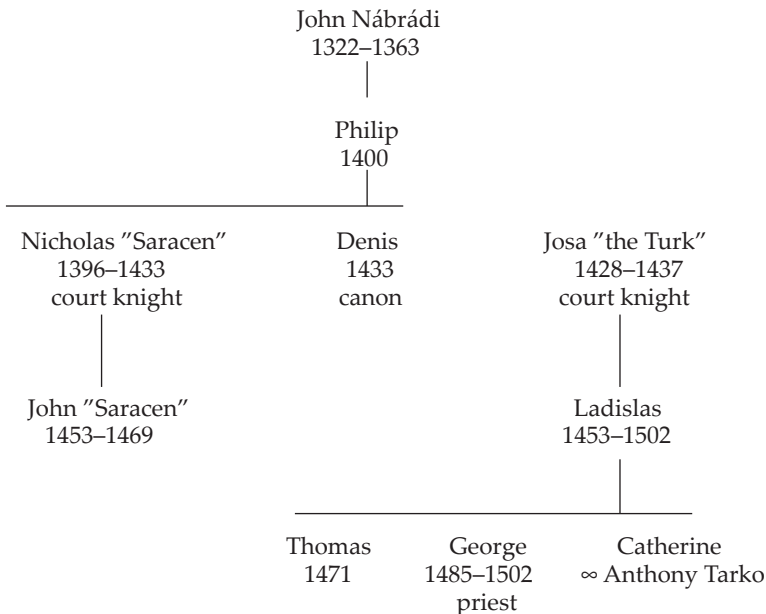
KERECSENYI family

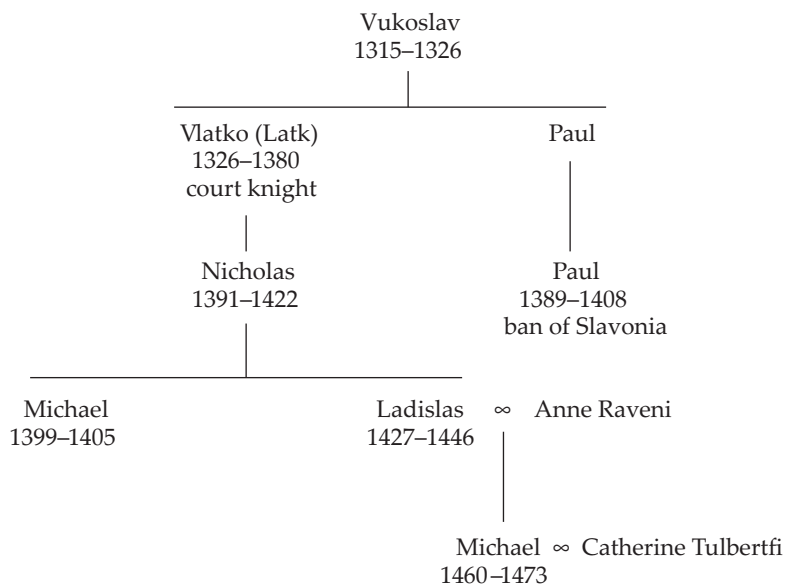
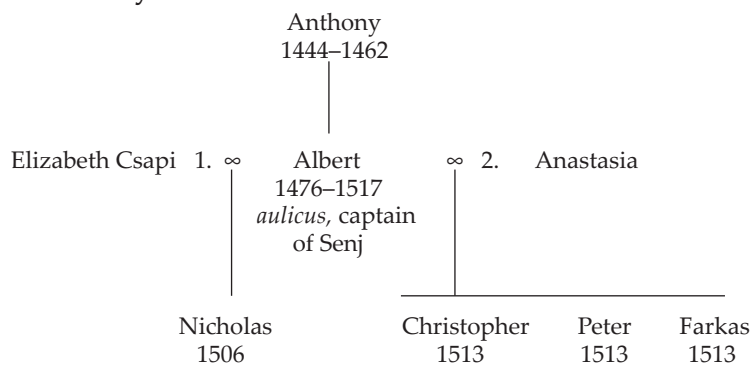


**KOPINCI family**

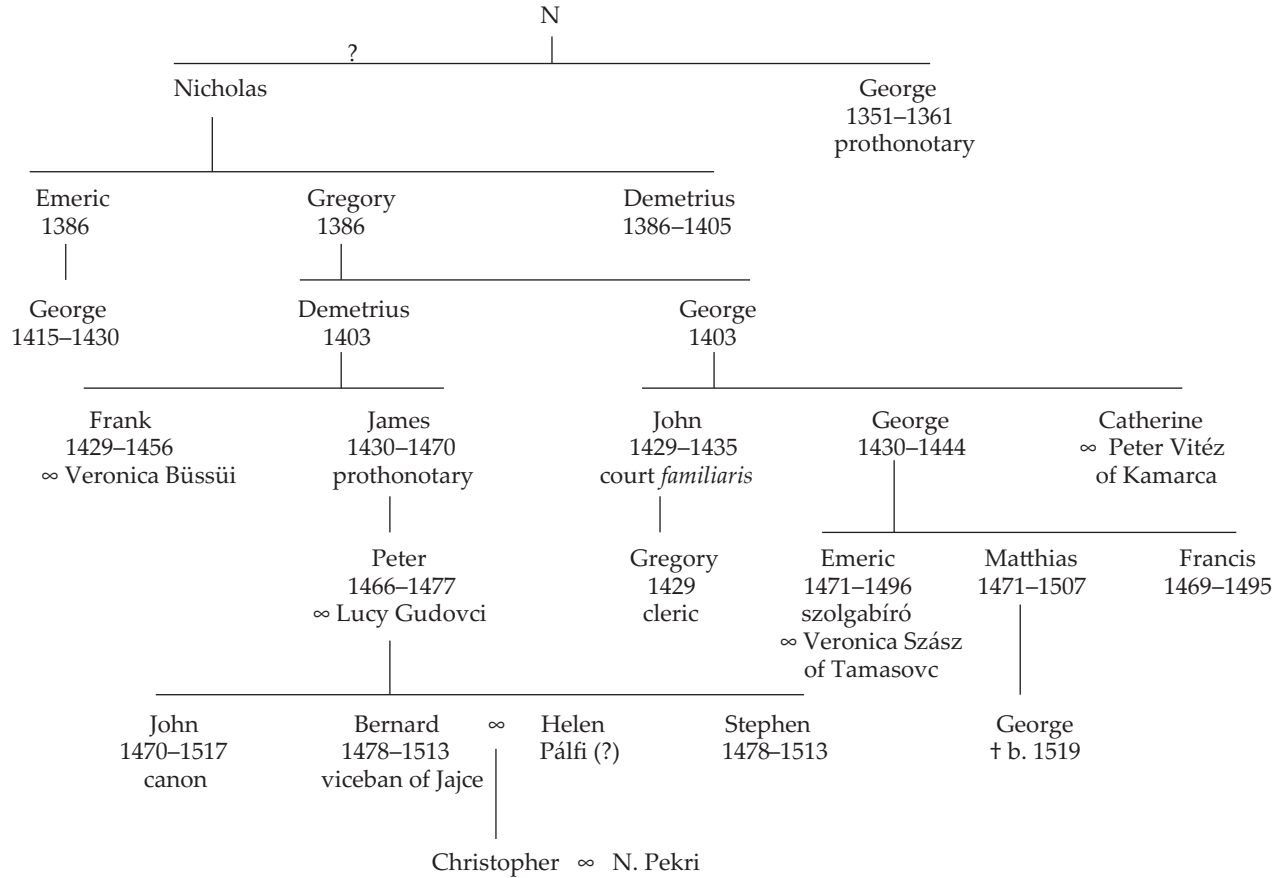


**KRISTALLÓCI (2) family**

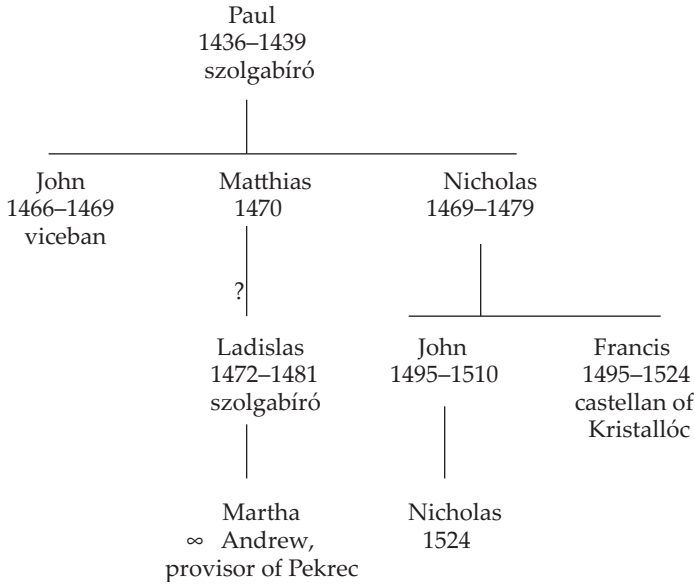


**LATKFI family****LÓNYAI family**

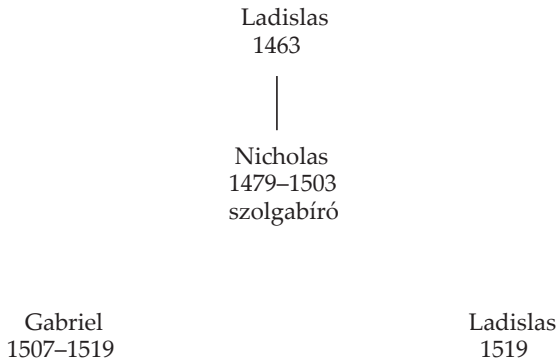
MEGYERICSEI family



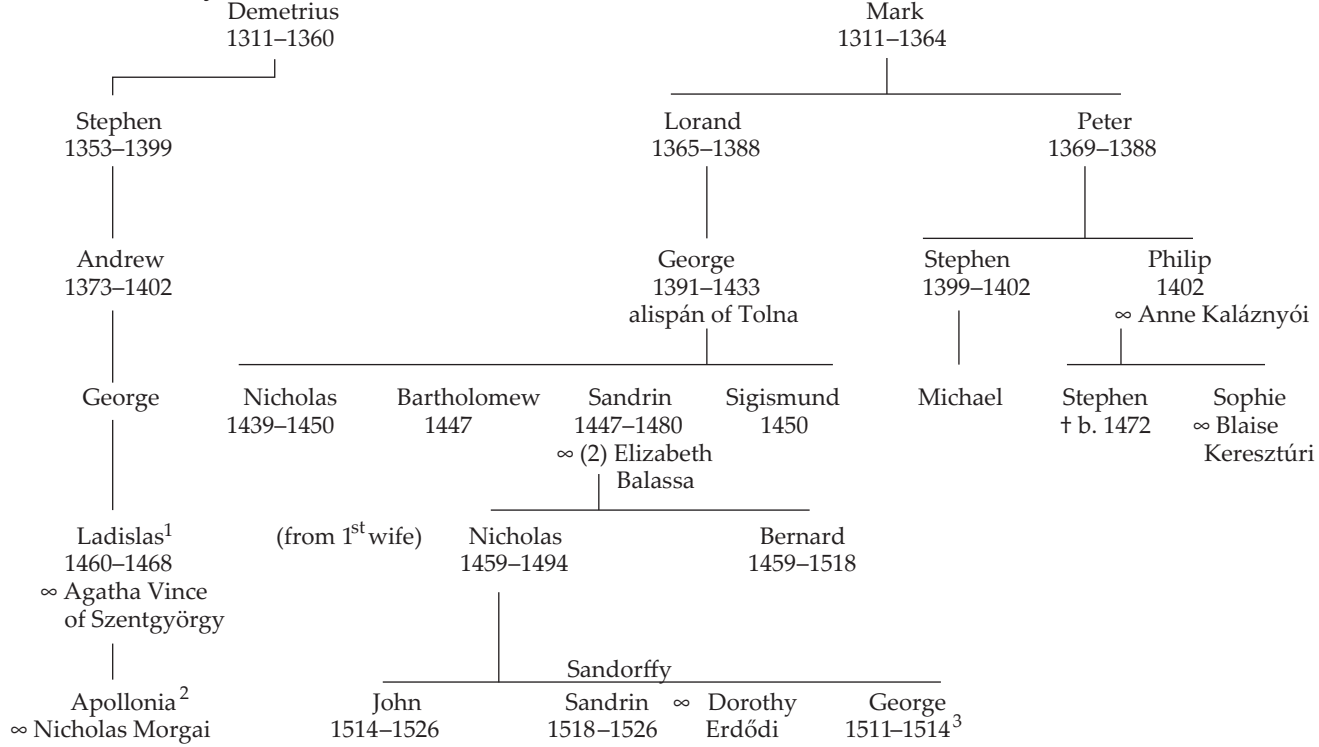
## MINDSZENTI family



## ORROS family



MUSINAI family

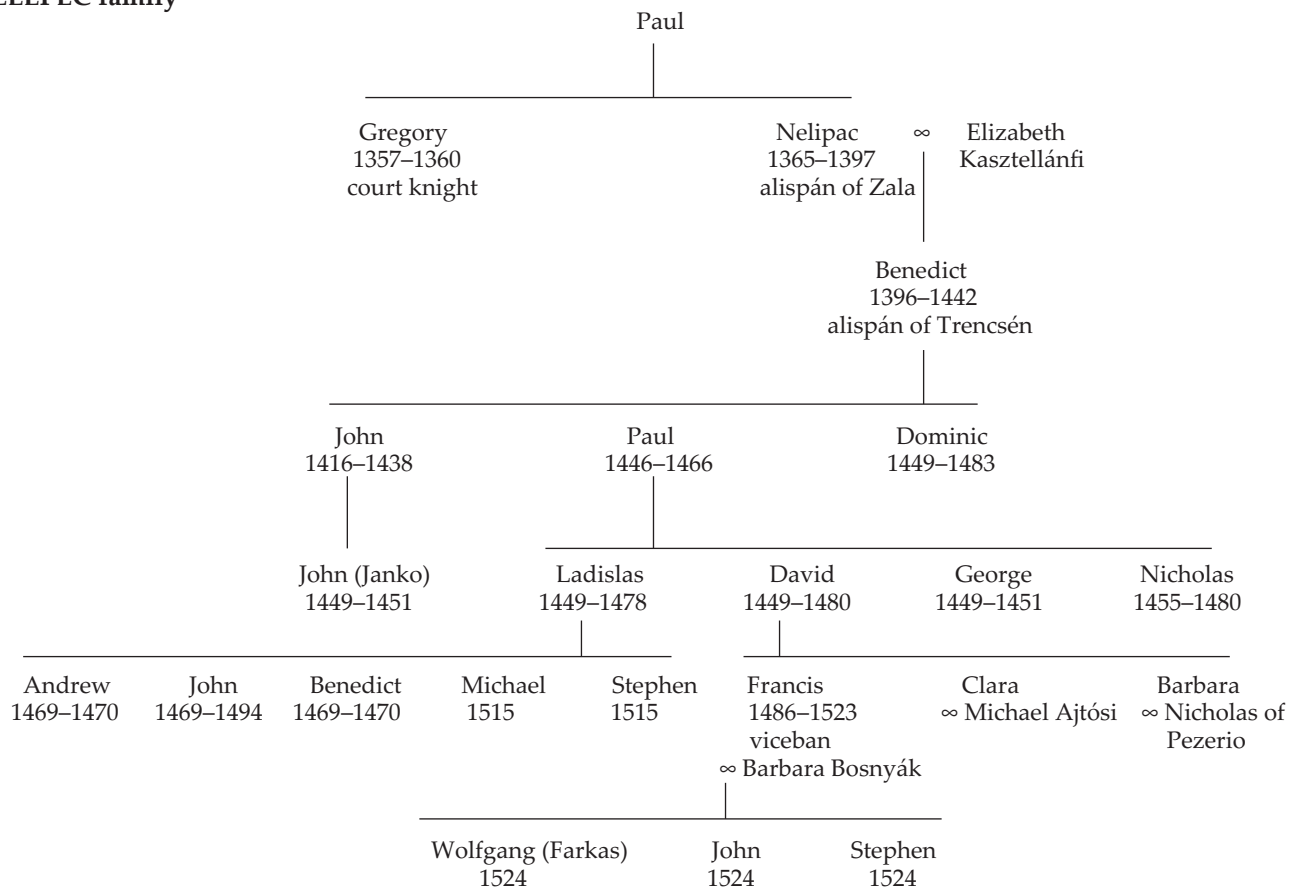


1 This Ladislás is twice said to have been the son of George, son of Lorand (MNL OL, DL 70 406, DL 98 002), and in the first case he was actually the source of the information. Yet he could not be the brother of Sandrin, with whom he was only frater generationalis. I therefore accepted the reconstruction of Pál Engel, although the charter upon which it is based (DL 15 881) is actually damaged, and the name of the grandfather of George cannot be read any more.

2 Her mother was a woman called Catherine, not Agatha Vince. MNL OL, DL 9800.

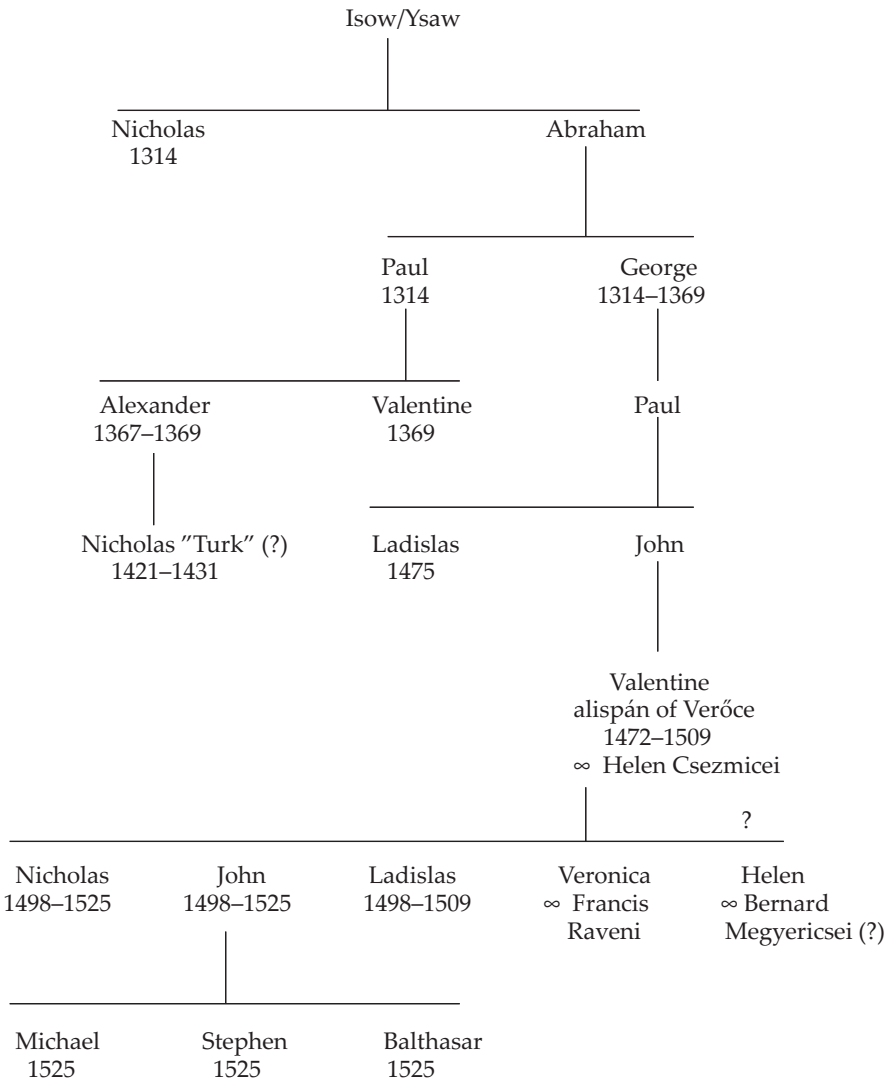
3 MNL OL, DF 209 446.

## NELEPEC family

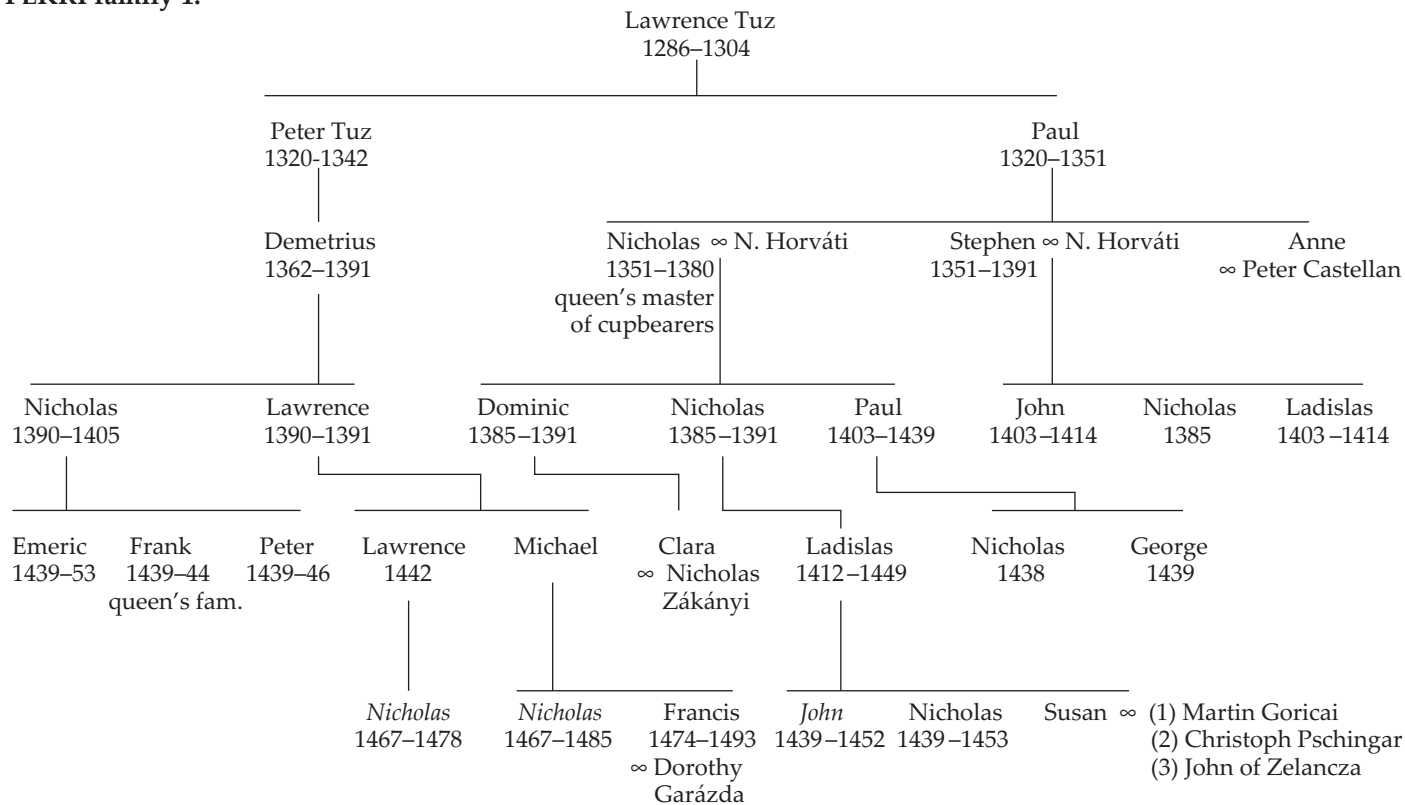




**PÁLFI family**

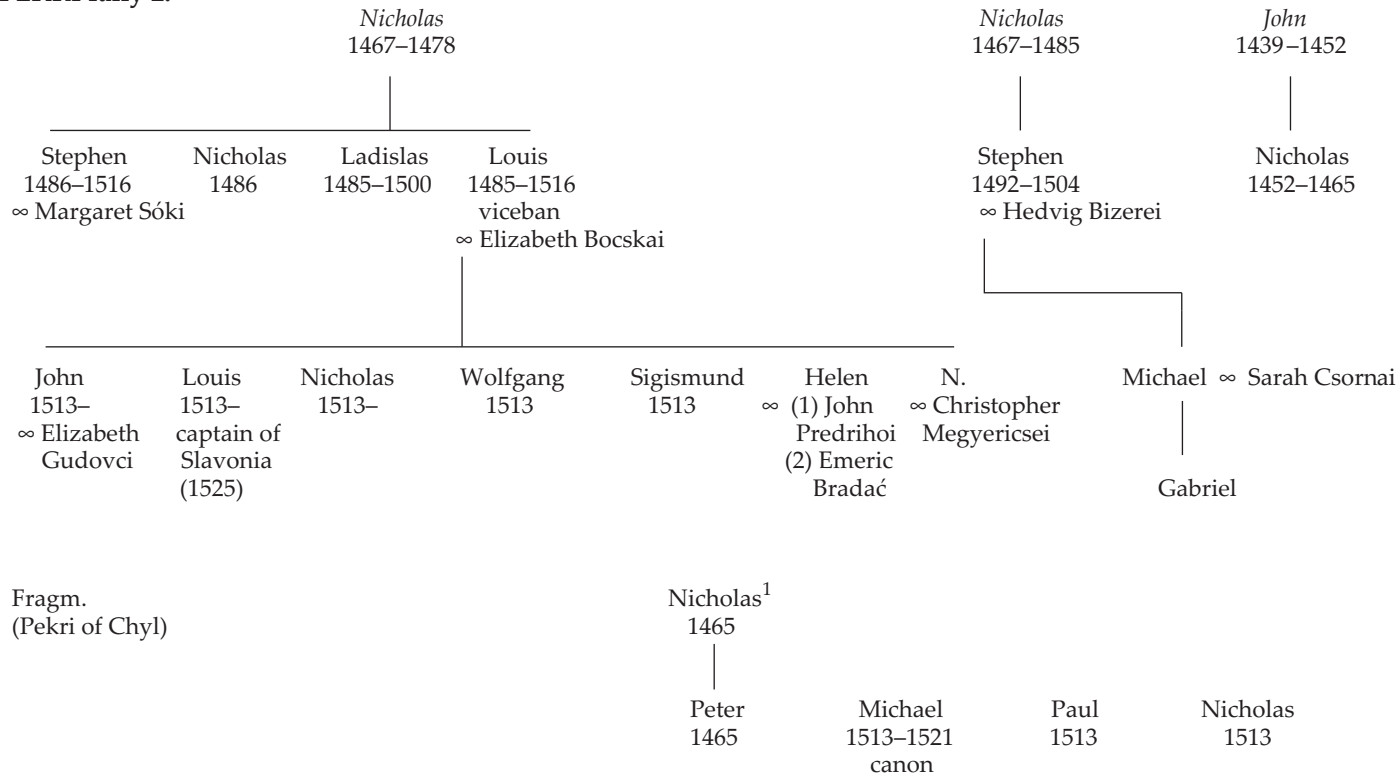


## PEKRI family 1.

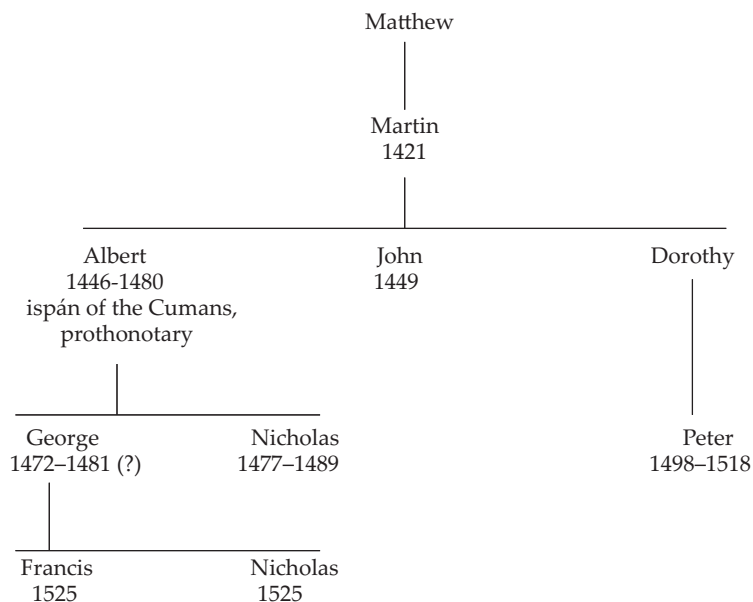
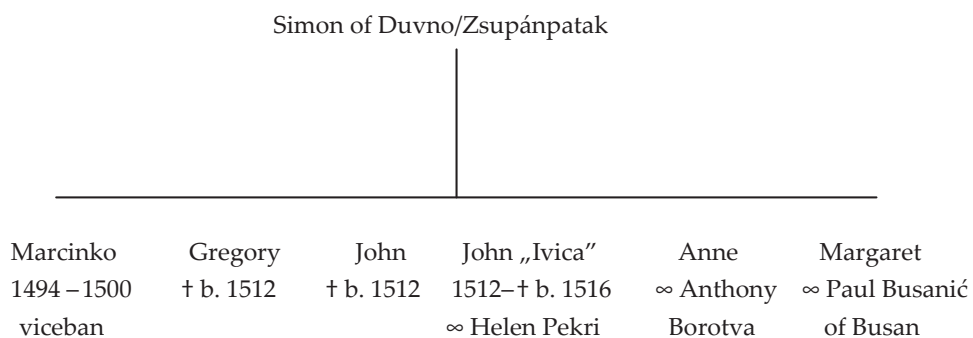


(See next table)

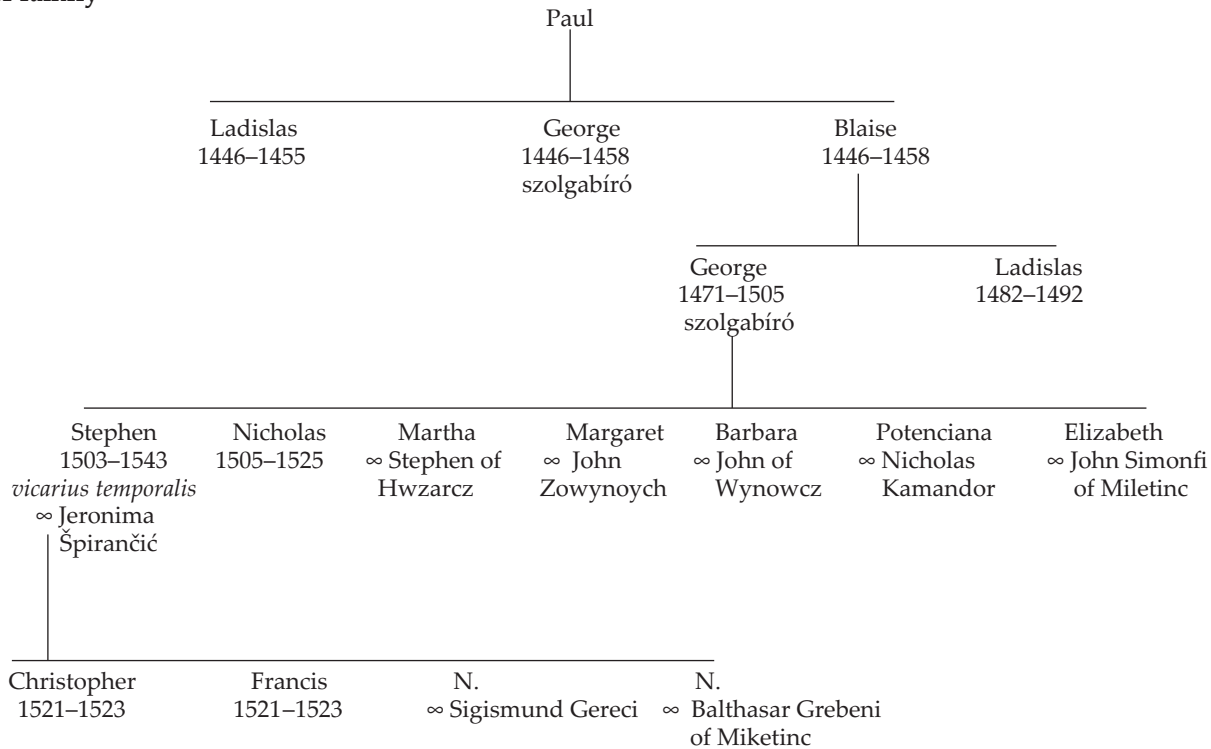
PEKRI faily 2.



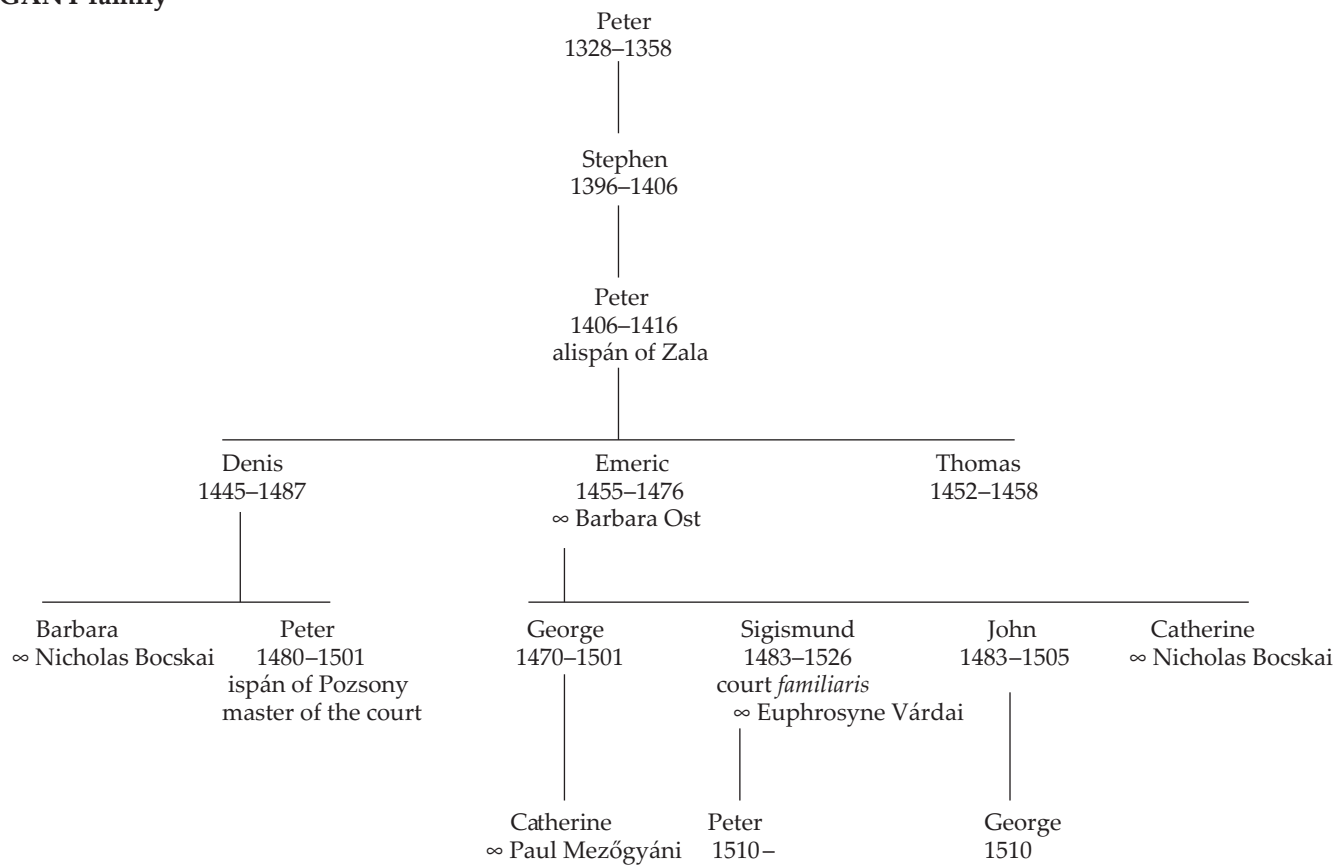
1 He may be identical with the son of Paul, son of Nicholas on the previous table.

**PATAKI family****PREDRIHOI family**

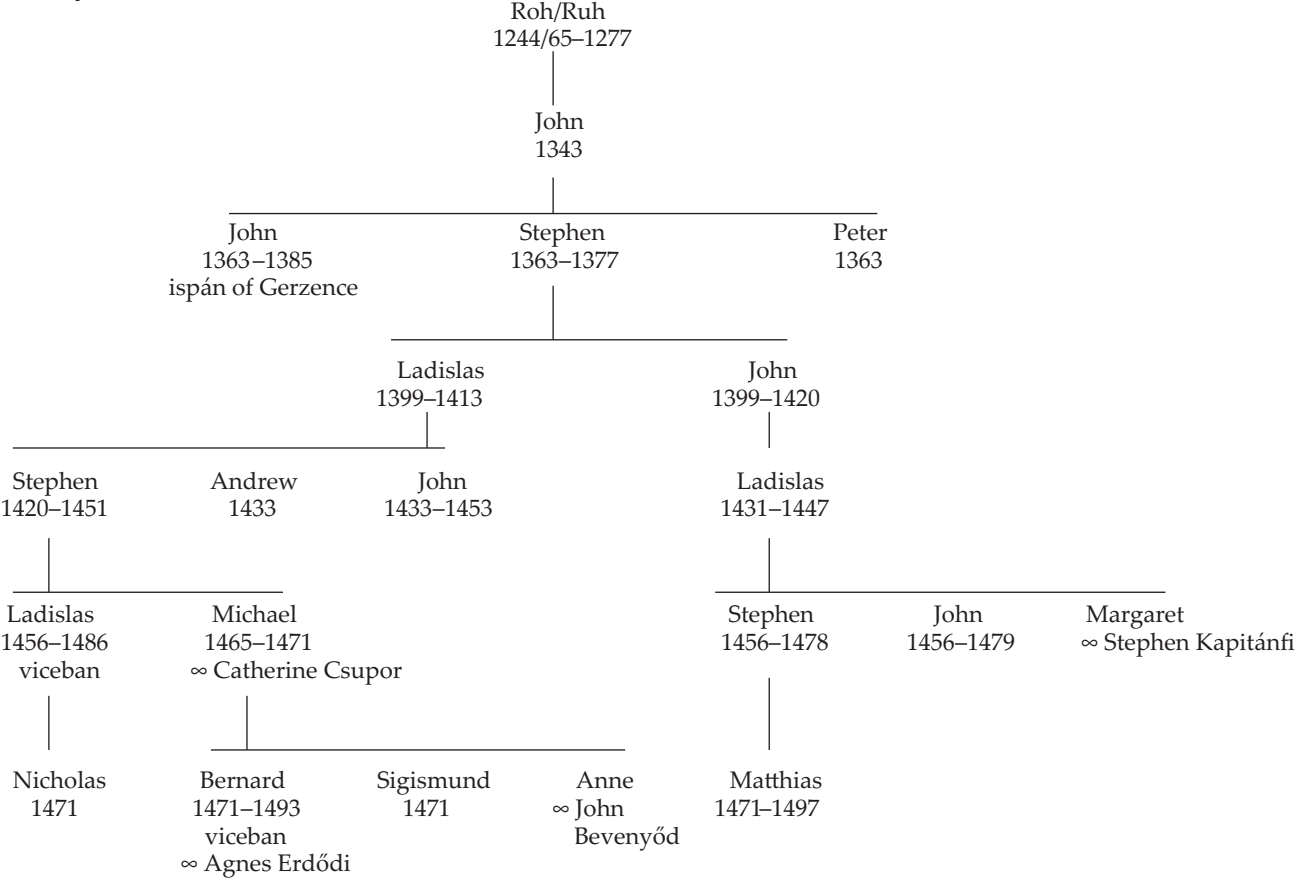
PRASOVCI family



## POGÁNY family

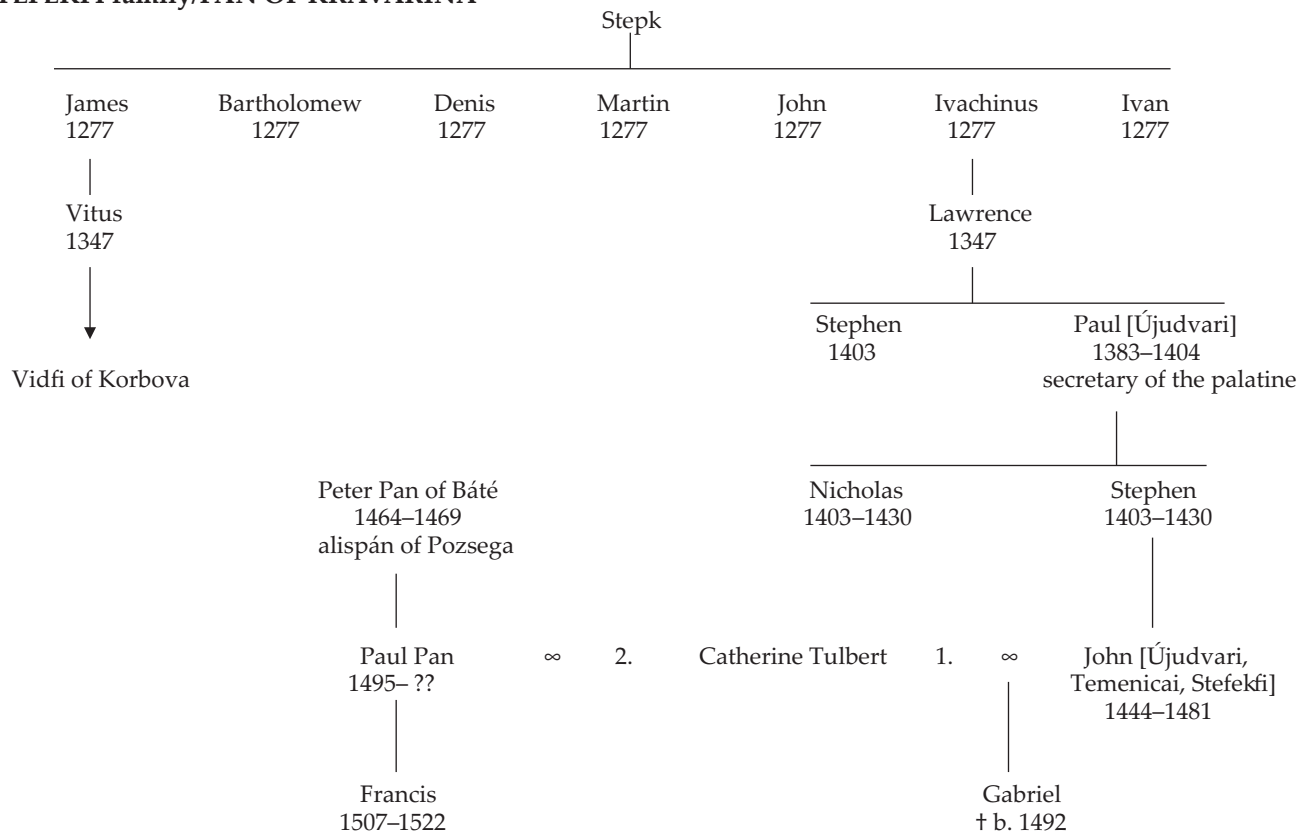


ROHFI family

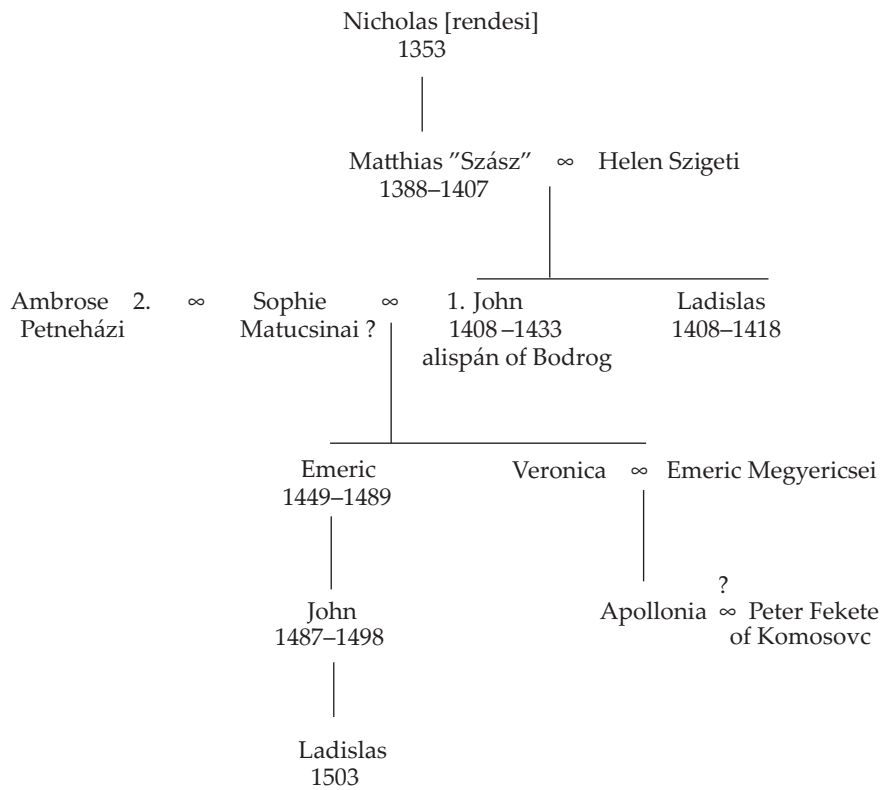




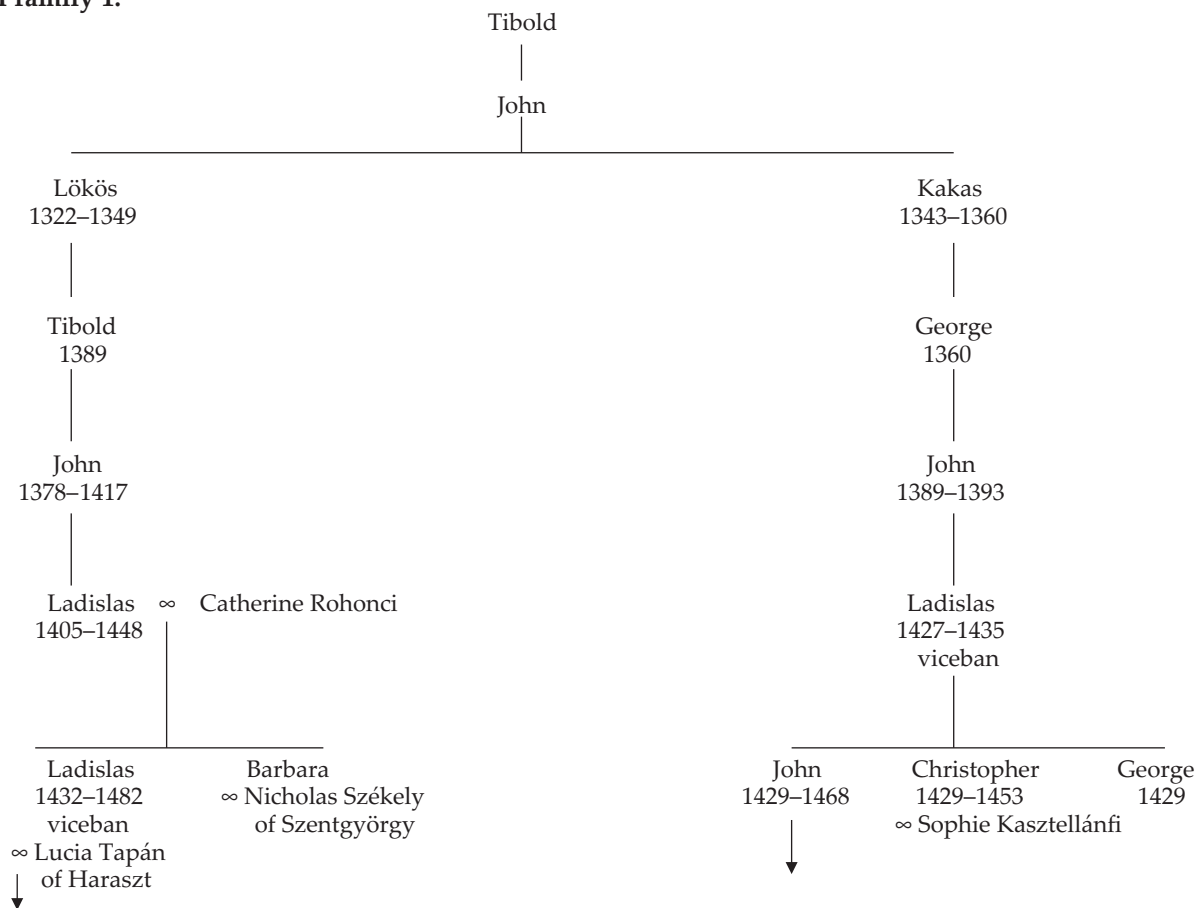
## STEFEKFI family/PAN OF KRAVARINA



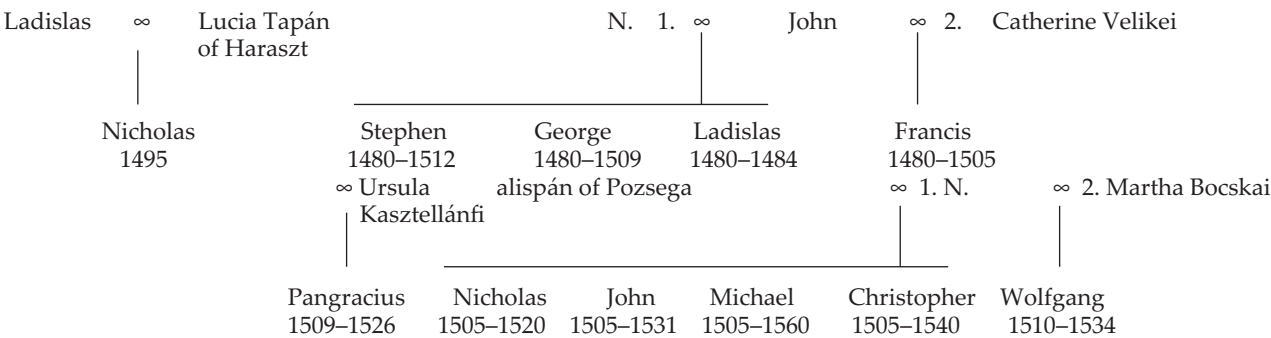
SZÁSZ family

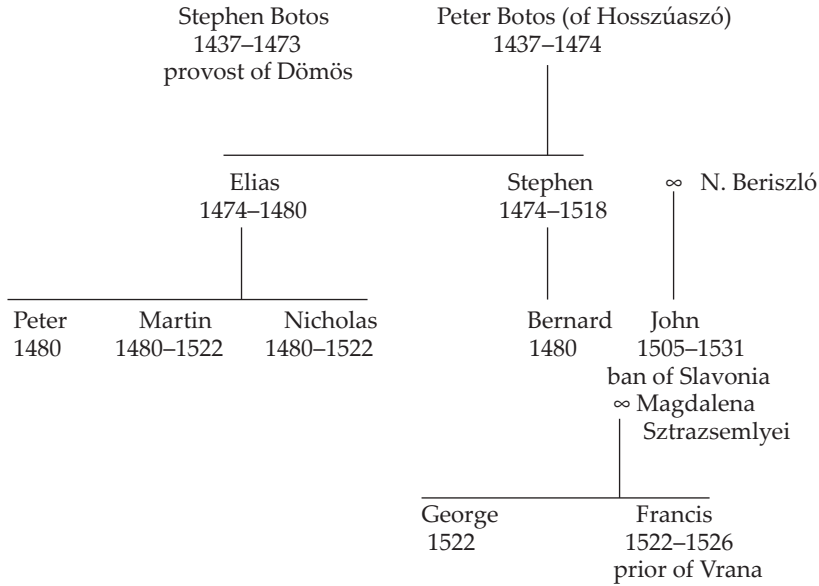
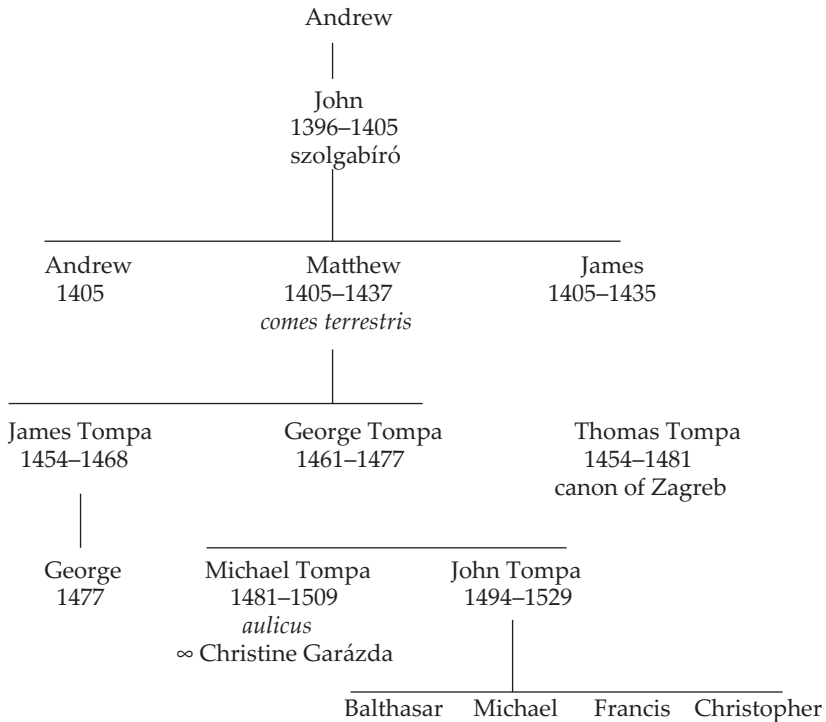


## SZENCSEI family 1.

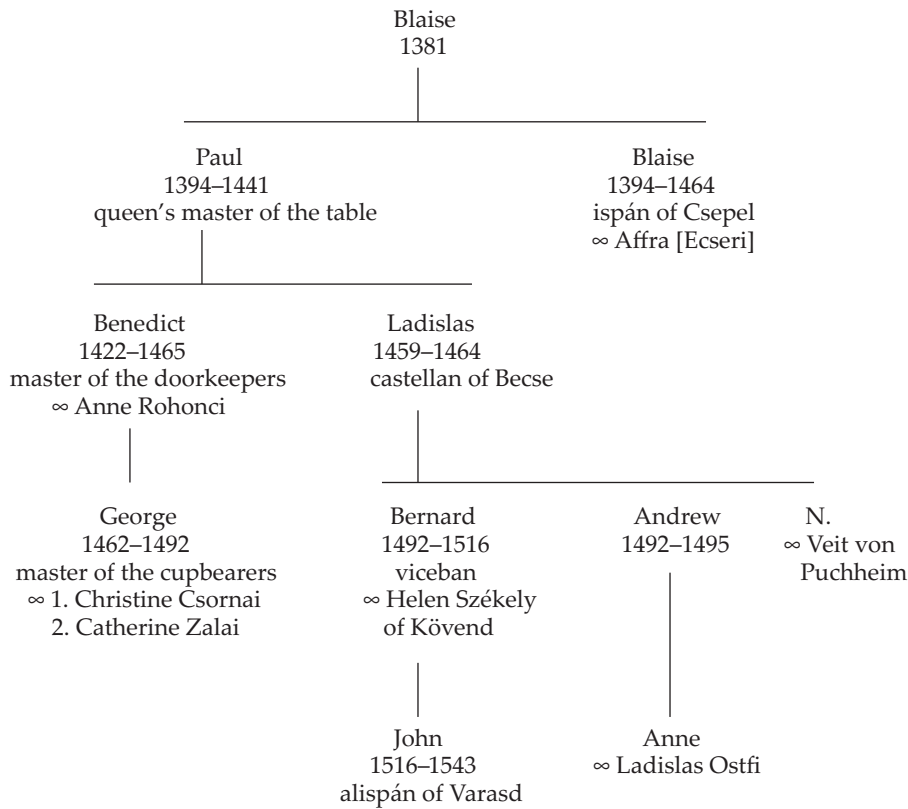


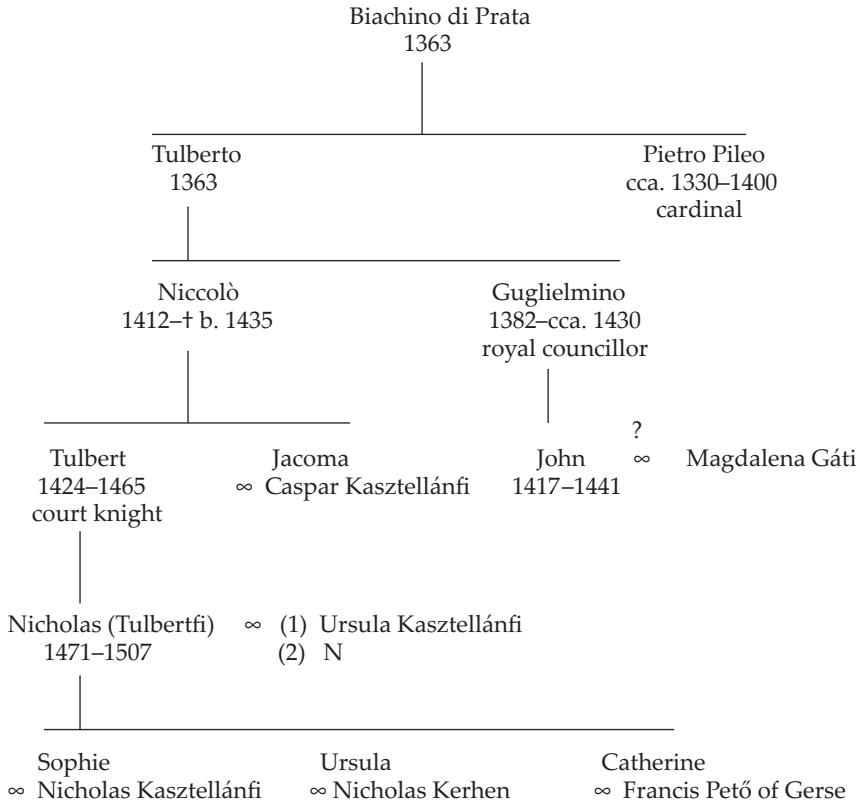
SZENCSEI family 2



**TAHI family****TOMPA family**

**TURÓCI family**



**TULBERT family**



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## GAZETTEER OF PLACE NAMES

The following list contains only the names of places in historical Slavonia, mentioned in the text, which can still be identified. Identification is based on Pál Engel, *Magyarország a középkor végén [Hungary at the End of the Middle Ages]*, CD-ROM, Budapest: Térinfó Bt. and MTA Történettudományi Intézet 2001.

- Atyina = Voćin (Cro.)
- Bakolca (Donja/Nova Bukovica, Cro.)
- Bednya(szentpéter) = Petar Ludbreški (Cro.)
- Berstyanóc = Bršljanica (Cro.)
- Berzőce = Stara Brezovica (Cro.)
- Bikszád = Bisag (Cro.)
- Bozsjákó = Božjakovina (Cro.)
- Bradna = Trema (?)*
- Budrovc = Budrovac (Cro.)
- Csányó = Čanjevo (Cro.)
- Cirkvena = Cirkvena (Cro.)
- Csáktornya (Zala) = Čakovec (Cro.)
- Csáktornya (Körös) = Čaklovac (Cro.)
- Csázma = Čazma (Cro.)
- Csersztvec = Čvrstec (Cro.)
- Csütörtökhely = Daruvar (Cro.)
- Darnóc = (Slatinski) Drenovac (Cro.)
- Desnice = Dišnik (Cro.)
- Diankovc = Diankovec (Cro.)
- Dianvára = Turski grad (?)
- Dobrakucsa = Dobra Kuća (Cro.)
- Dombró = Dubrava (Cro.)
- Dubovc = Dubovac (Cro.)
- Fejérkő = Bijela Stijena (Cro.)
- Gerec = Stari Gradac (Cro.)
- Gerzence = Gračenica (Cro.)
- Gojl = Gojlo (Cro.)
- Golgonca = Glogovnica (Cro.)
- Gorbonok = Kloštar Podravski (Cro.)
- Gordova = Grđevac (Cro.)
- Greben = Madžarevo/Grebengrad (Cro.)

Gudovc = Gudovac (Cro.)  
 Herbortya = Veliki Poganac (Cro.)  
 Heresinc/Galovc = Galovac (Cro.)  
 Hévíz = Daruvar (Cro.)  
 Horzova = Hrsovo (Cro.)  
 Hrasztovica = Hrastovica (Cro.)  
 Ivanc = Kloštar Ivanić (Cro.)  
 Izdenc = Zdenci (Cro.)  
 Jakószerdahely = Sredice (Cro.)  
 Kamarca = Novigrad Podravski (Cro.)?  
 Kamenica = Kamenica Ivanečka (Cro.)  
 Kapronca = Koprivnica (Cro.)  
 Kéthely (Kedhely) = Koledinec (Cro.)  
 Kontovc = Kontovac (Cro.)  
 Kopacsovc = Kopačevac (Cro.)  
 Korbova = Grbavac (Cro.)  
 Kotnyak = Kutnjak (Cro.)  
 Kravarina = Grahovljani (Cro.)  
 Kristallóc = Kreštelovac (Cro.)  
 Kustyerolc = Gušćerovec (Cro.)  
 Kutenya = Kutina (Cro.)  
 Ludbreg = Ludbreg (Cro.)  
 Lukavec = Lukavec (Cro.)  
 Martinyanc = Martijanec (Cro.),  
 Mártonpataka = Martinpotok (Cro.)  
 Medve = Medvedgrad (Cro.)  
 Megyericse = Međurača (Cro.)  
 Miglec = Maglenca (Cro.)  
 Monoszló (Csupor) = Moslavina  
 Monoszló = Podravska Moslavina (Cro.)  
 Musina = Šandrovac (Cro.)  
 Nagykemlék = Kalnik (Cro.)  
 Nagytábor = Veliki Tabor (Cro.)  
 Novaszentmárton = Martinac Trojstveni  
 Orbona = Obrovica (Cro.)  
 Orehovc(szentpéter) = Orehovec (Cro.)  
 Oslovc = Oslavica (Cro.)  
 Oszterc = Oštrc (Cro.)  
 Palicsnaszentpéter = Severin/Polična (Cro.)  
 Palisna = Palešnik (Cro.)  
 Patak = Potok Kalnički (Cro.)  
 Pekerszerdahely = Sredjani (Cro.)  
 Peklence = Paklenica (Cro.)  
 Pekrec = Pakrac (Cro.)

Pestenye = Pistana (Cro.)  
 Plavnicaszentbenedek = Stare Plavnice (Cro.)  
 Podversa = Podvrško (Cro.)  
 Polositica = Stara Ploščica (Cro.)  
 Prasovc = Prašćevac (Cro.)  
 Predrihó = Gornje Predrijevo (Cro.)  
 Prodaviz = Virje (Cro.)  
 Progovc = Prugovac (Cro.)  
 Racsá = Rača (Cro.)  
 Raholca = Orahovica (Cro.)  
 Rakonok = Rakovec (Cro.)  
 Raszinyakeresztúr = Rasinja (Cro.)  
 Raven(szentlászló) = Raven (Cro.)  
 Repinc = Repinec (Cro.)  
 Rojcsa = Rovišće (Cro.)  
 Rosecsnik = Roždanik (Cro.)  
 Sabnicaszentiván = Žabno (Cro.)  
 Szagyolca = Čađavica (Cro.)  
 Szalatnok = Slatina (Cro.)  
 Szamobor = Samobor (Cro.)  
 Szaplónca = Stupčanica/Veliki Baštaji (Cro.)  
 Szászovc = Sasovac (Cro.)  
 Szentbenedek = Babinac (Cro.)  
 Szerterzsébet = Jugovo Polje (Cro.)  
 Szentgyörgy = Đurđevac (Cro.)  
 Szentlélek = Duhovi (Cro.)  
 Szentlőrinc = Gostović (Cro.)  
 Szircs = Sirač (Cro.)  
 Szlavina = Slanje (Cro.)  
 Szobocsina = Soboština (Korenovo, Cro.)?  
 Szobotica = Subotica Podravska (Cro.)  
 Szombathely = Subocki grad (Cro.)  
 Szomszédvár = Susedgrad (Cro.)  
 Sztenicsnyak = Steničnjak (Cro.)  
 Sztrazsemlje = Stražeman (Cro.)  
 Sztreza = Pavlin Kloštar (Cro.)  
 Sztrigó = Štrigova (Cro.)  
 Sztubica = Stubica (Cro.)  
 Szuhamlaka = Suha Mlaka (Cro.)  
 Tapalóc = Topolovac (Cro.)  
 Terbenye = Turbina/Slatina (Cro.)  
 Trakostyán = Trakošćan (Cro.)  
 Urbanovc = Vrbanovec (Cro.)  
 Valkó = Vukovar (Cro.)

Valpó = Valpovo (Cro.)  
 Varasd = Varaždin (Cro.)  
 Vaska = Vaška (Cro.)  
 Vasmegyericse = Međurić (Cro.)  
 Vecseszlavc = Večeslavec (Cro.)  
 Velike (Körös) = Kraljeva Velika (Cro.)  
 Velike (Pozsega) = Velika (Cro.)  
 Verbovc = Vrbovec (Cro.)  
 Verőce = Virovitica (Cro.)  
 Vertlin = Vrtlinska (Cro.)  
 Vinarc = Vinarec (Cro.)  
 Vinica = Vinica (Cro.)  
 Vokovina = Vukovina (Cro.)  
 Zajezda = Zajezda (Cro.)  
 Zamlachya = Zamlache (Cro.)  
 Zengg = Senj (Cro.)  
 Zselnyak = Sirač (Cro.)



# INDEX

The index contains all historical names which figure in the main text and the first two appendixes. For rulers I only give the royal (imperial) titles, in the order of acquisition, or simple alphabetical order in case of a simultaneous inheritance. For the barons and prelates, instead of offering a complete archontological database, which is not the aim of the present book, I only indicate the offices with which they turn up in the text. Persons bearing the same name are distinguished by the names of their fathers, or, if the latter are also identical, by those of their grandfathers.

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